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Hortense, 1783-1887

The memoirs of Queen Hortense

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THE MEMOIRS OF
Queen Hortense

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QUEEN HORTENSE
From the Collection of Prince Napoleon

Hortense, consort of Louis, King of Holland, 1783-1837

THE MEMOIRS OF
Queen Hortense

Published by arrangement with Prince Napoleon

Edited by Jean Hanoteau

Translated by
Arthur K. Griggs

VOLUME I.

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Printed in the U. S. A.

1885

Printed in the United States of America by
J. J. LITTLE AND IVES COMPANY, NEW YORK

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PREFACE BY THE EDITOR

I

After the return of the Bourbons and following the Emperor's departure for Saint Helena, Queen Hortense, guilty, as the Duc de Vicence put it, of bearing a name which still caused the universe to tremble, wandered about for a long time in search of an asylum. In December 1815 she believed she had found a welcome refuge at Constance in the Grand Duchy of Baden. But the hatred of the Allies was still watchful. In spite of the Grand Duke's personal sympathy for her, as well as that of the Grande Duchesse Stéphanie de Beauharnais, the diplomatic intrigues of the Holy Alliance made this retreat a precarious one. On February 10, 1817, the Queen bought the castle of Arenenberg on Lake Constance. But even her rights to possess this little corner of land were contested. Finally the loyal friendship of the King of Bavaria allowed the stepdaughter of Napoleon to acquire the Hôtel de Waldeck, in the rue Sainte-Croix at Augsburg. She settled there on May 6, 1817.

It was at Constance during that mournful winter of 1816-1817 while her fate was still undecided that the Queen undertook to compose her memoirs.

Endowed with an extremely sensitive nature and like her mother animated by a constant desire to please and to gain people's affection, Hortense suffered from the slightest unfavorable criticism. Because of her kindness of heart, because she knew that she had never consciously harmed anyone, she wished public opinion to judge her always on her merits. Fifteen years of public life had not steeled her against malicious scandal-mongering. She

made the mistake of believing that the latter was due entirely to ignorance of the truth. Her friends had changed her motto, "Least known, least annoyed" into "Better known, better loved," and she joyfully had adopted the new phrase.

Thus it was natural that having found a refuge and impelled by her desire to justify her conduct she should spend long hours in trying in various ways to make herself "better known."

Already at the time of the imperial divorce, "hearing someone blame her brother for having consented to it"—it is Hortense herself speaking—"surprised by the difficulties truth encounters to make itself widely known" she had noted down the details of the event but had not gone any further.

It was in 1812 while the Queen was taking the waters at Aix-la-Chapelle that the Comtesse de Nansouty had urged her to write the story of her life.

When Hortense declared she would not have the patience to do such a thing the Comtesse de Nansouty proposed to record what she would tell her. "The next day"—as is stated farther on in the text of the memoirs—"she brought me what I had told her the day before about certain incidents in my childhood. But it was not like me. While admitting the merits of this account I declared I did not care to hear myself using any other words than my own, and the volume went no further than the first page, which she kept."

Louise Cochelet, who was a faithful although not always a very well-inspired friend of Hortense, relates how, at Constance, the pages were composed which now are being published in accordance with the wishes of Prince Napoleon. "The Queen as usual spent the morning at home, working alone. It was at this time that the need to refute the lies and slanders which had appeared during the last two years suggested to her the idea of writing her memoirs. She felt as if it were a moral duty

to describe events as they had occurred, to reply victoriously to the libelous accusations which had been brought against the Emperor. The misinterpretation of his motives, the distorted accounts of his actions could not better be set right than by someone who, having always lived near him, knew his ideas and his character.

"As for the malicious gossip of which she herself had been made the object she felt so far above such base libels that, in order completely to annihilate them, all she had to do was to tell the truth about what actually took place and set down on paper a simple record of her conduct. This having been accomplished she felt relieved and thought no more about it." [1]

Mademoiselle Cochelet adds, "The memoirs of the Queen begun at Constance in 1816 will not see the light till after her death. She had continued them, turning back to the years previous to that in which she began them. It is a legacy she is preparing which she will leave to historians whom time shall have rendered impartial." [2]

The Queen's manuscript is dated Augsburg, 1820. This date is that on which she completed it. But on November 19, 1830, Mademoiselle Valérie Masuyer, who had just assumed the post of reader to the Queen, in telling how the latter organized her life in Rome writes: "She wishes to stay at home till three o'clock every day in order to go over again the memoirs she began in 1816 and abandoned in 1820." [3]

In 1833, Buchon, the scholar who spent a winter at Arenenberg, also said: "Sometimes the Queen devotes her leisure to adding a page to her memoirs, which are a sort of monologue in which the soul expresses itself with-

[1] *Mémoires sur la Reine Hortense et la Famille Impériale,* by Mlle. Cochelet (Madame Parquin). Paris, Ladvocat, 1836-1838, 4 vols. in-octavo, vol. IV, page 299.

[2] Mlle. Cochelet, *loc. cit.* Vol. IV, page 301.

[3] *La Reine Hortense et le Prince Louis.* Extracts from the diary of Mademoiselle Valérie Masuyer, published by Colonel Patrice Mahon in the *Revue des Deux Mondes,* August 15, 1914, page 834.

out fearing a stranger's glance."[4] Numerous traces of these revisions, as will be seen later, are to be found in the original manuscripts.

The memoirs which follow are not the only effort on the part of the Queen to reestablish the truth.

Following the conflicting interpretations which had been placed on her trip in 1831 through France and England, she again took up her pen, and going back for an instant to the point where her former narrative had stopped she retraced briefly the events that had occurred since that time. On this matter Buchon writes as follows: "The Queen was kind enough to read the simple, eloquent and moving account she composed following this journey. Everything is explained, everything becomes clear and understandable. This narrative was written simply for her personal satisfaction and as a continuation of her interesting memoirs, of which she had been kind enough to read me some exceedingly interesting passages in 1821. She did not care to display her private sorrows to the public. Had there not appeared at that time those fictitious memoirs bearing her name[5] in which with the best possible intentions she had been pictured as speaking, writing and acting as she certainly never dreamed of speaking, writing or acting, it would have been difficult to conquer this repugnance."

These scruples having been overcome, the narrative referred to above appeared in 1834 in Paris under the title of *La Reine Hortense en Italie, en France et en*

[4] *Quelques souvenirs de courses en Suisse et dans le pays de Baden* by J. A. C. Buchon, Paris, Gide, 1836, page 246.

[5] Allusion to the *Mémoires sur la Reine Hortense aujourd'hui Duchesse de Saint-Leu,* collected and published by the Baron W. F. Van Scheelten, Paris, Canel, 1833, 2 volumes in-octavo, which had just appeared. Referring to them Hortense, in a letter dated July 8, 1833, said to Madame Salvage: "At least it was very lucky you arrived in time to put *on* instead of *off.*" On October 31, 1833, the Queen writing again to the wife of Marshal Ney: "I suppose you have read those stupid memoirs that appeared about me. That has decided me to have the account of my sad trip to France, which I wrote this winter, published." (Notes on autograph letters sold at auction, collected by Noël Charavay.)

Angleterre. Fragments extraits de ses Mémoires inédits écrits par elle-même.[6]

By painstaking research one might possibly find in still other quarters traces of the Queen's ideas.[7]

In November 1836 there appeared at the establishment of the bookseller and publisher, Ladvocat, the first two volumes of the *Mémoires sur la Reine Hortense et la Famille Impériale par Mademoiselle Cochelet, lectrice de la Reine (Madame Parquin).*[8]

The publisher in a "Note to the Public" tells how, about November 12, 1836, an employee of one of the important stagecoach offices situated in the rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires left the manuscript of this work at his shop. The following day a friend called and explained to the publisher that the memoirs must be published before the 25th of that month and that this date limit was the only condition attached to their publication.

One should always be suspicious in regard to notices of this kind. A taste for publicity, a desire to arouse the curiosity of the public, a love for hoaxes did not originate in our day.

Louise Cochelet died at Wolfsberg near Arenenberg on May 7, 1835. Her heirs were her husband and a daughter, the latter still a child. The husband was ar-

[6] The first edition appeared in Paris, Levavasseur, 1834, in-octavo, x+ 324 pages. The same year these fragments were reprinted in the series *Mémoires de tous, Collection de souvenirs contemporains,* Paris, Levavasseur, 1834, in-octavo, Vol. I, pages 67-280. In 1845 Temblaire again gave lengthy extracts in his *Revue de l'Empire,* 3rd year, pages 97, 150, 313, 577. Finally a last edition appeared in Paris, Bourdilliat, 1861, in-twelvemo, 284 pages.

[7] It is known that it was the Queen herself who, in order to reply to passages in the *Mémorial* relating to opinions expressed by Napoleon at Saint Helena on Josephine and on Hortense's marriage, had published by Didot in 1833 the *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine et Lettres de Joséphine à Napoléon et à sa fille,* 2 vols., octavo. She also was instrumental in the publication of the *Correspondance de Madame Campan avec le Reine Hortense,* published by J. A. C. Buchon, Paris, Levavasseur, 1835, 2 vols., octavo.

[8] The *Journal des Débats* announced on November 19, 1836, that they would be placed on sale November 25 at the price of 16 francs or 18 francs post free.

rested with Prince Louis Napoleon at Strassburg, October 30, 1836. As he was to be tried by a court martial he was confined to prison until the day he was acquitted, January 18, 1837. Consequently he was not free when Ladvocat received his visitor.

Madame Parquin's brother had nothing to do with the publication of these memoirs. Following the announcement of their publication, which appeared on the fourth page of the *Journal des Débats,* November 19, the editor of the paper received a letter from Charles Cochelet, at that time paymaster general in the Ardennes, which was reprinted in the issue of the 24th. It read: "As the issue of your paper appearing on the 19th of this month contained, to my great astonishment, an announcement of the forthcoming publication of the Memoirs signed by Mademoiselle Cochelet, kindly be good enough to announce that this publication is made without the knowledge of her family, who probably would not have given their consent."

Ladvocat replied by referring to the reader's other brother, Adrien, at that time Consul General in Bucharest.

In the *Journal des Débats,* November 25, there appeared this statement signed by the bookseller: "After a visit, the day before yesterday, from Monsieur Adrien Cochelet I had no reason to expect the appearance of the letter from his elder brother. . . . Allow me to inform you, sir, that the Memoirs of Mademoiselle Cochelet were brought me by a person who, when the author was on her death-bed, received from her the order to have them published. I believe I have taken sufficient pains to indicate to Monsieur Adrien Cochelet the origin of these memoirs not to be accused by his brother, the paymaster in the Ardennes, of having undertaken their publication from purely mercenary motives. . . . In regard to the Memoirs of Mademoiselle Cochelet I may say that I am surprised that the author's brothers are the

only persons who are not aware of the existence of this curious and witty collection of portraits which all the distinguished guests at the Château of Wolfsberg in Thurgovia (a Swiss canton near Lake Constance) had opportunities to appreciate when Mademoiselle Cochelet herself read them selections from it. It would be impossible to invent everything the author relates."

This reply did not satisfy Charles Cochelet. Ladvocat placed his volumes on sale November 26, a day later than had been announced. The same day they were seized by the authorities.[9]

The newspapers, however, mention that "this seizure was made as a result of a discussion regarding the ownership of the manuscript." [10]

An effective outside influence must have intervened for the public was soon able to purchase the work, and the two last volumes appeared without further objections having been made in December 1837. They were dated 1838.[11]

As a matter of fact the publisher's anonymous correspondent was the Queen herself or at least the package had been sent at her instigation.

The appearance of the work brought opportune aid to the unfortunate companions of her son involved in his Strassburg adventure. Besides this Hortense was not altogether a stranger to the actual composition of the pages which were to appear in print.

It is impossible, if one compares the memoirs of Cochelet for the years 1814, 1815 and 1816 and those of the Queen covering the same period, not to be struck with many analogies in their texts. Their descriptions agree, generally, more closely than one is accustomed to find in

[9] *Le Droit, Journal des Tribunaux,* issue of November 27, 1836, 1st year, No. 357.

[10] *La Charte de 1830,* clipping quoted by *Le Droit* in its issue of November 30, 1836, 1st year No. 360.

[11] Volumes III and IV are announced in the *Journal des Débats,* December 9, 1837, "on sale at Ladvocat's, Place du Palais-Royal."

the case of testimony of two different witnesses of the same event. This might be explained, to be sure, by the fact that Mademoiselle Cochelet was familiar with the unpublished writings of her mistress and had followed their context.[12]

There can be no doubt that the main portion of the work was really written by the Queen's companion. Certain pages could have been written by no one else. Those, for instance, where Louise gives rein to her love of intrigue, where she naively displays her satisfaction at meeting prominent people, in short where she does not hide any of those faults which were precisely those with which the Duchesse de Saint-Leu (Hortense's title after the fall of Napoleon) reproached her.

It is also quite certain that she noted on paper some of her recollections. For those who knew her the reverse would have seemed astonishing. On this point we have not only the evidence of Ladvocat, but even the confession of her brother Charles who, in his letter to the *Journal des Débats* quoted above, admits: "It is true, monsieur, that my sister, at the time of her death, left a large number of letters, the existence of which was due to the brilliant acquaintances she made in connection with her former position. Perhaps even some recollections written in her handwriting may have been found among her papers intended as a precious inheritance for her daughter. But certainly she never planned to use the letters, unedited and unselected, as the basis for a volume of memoirs. The letters, although from people of high rank, were only of personal interest. Even had she decided to undertake such a publication, and I doubt this very strongly, she would have done it with that reserve and tact which distinguished her. I cannot say if one

[12] This was what Aubenas thought judging from verbal reports he had heard. "Mademoiselle Cochelet had at her disposal the unpublished Memoirs of the Queen Hortense and, we are told, used them extensively." (Joseph Aubenas, *Histoire de l'Impératrice Joséphine.* Paris, Amyot, 1859, 2 vols., in-octavo, vol. II, page 541.)

will find these qualities in the present memoirs, doubtless written in part by someone else."

In spite of these elaborately cautious sentences intended to shield the responsibility of the paymaster of the Ardennes from any complaints that might be forthcoming from persons of high rank, it will be noticed that he does not deny the existence of a manuscript which has been revised and corrected "by some other person." That person was the Queen. Hortense had embroidered on the canvas left by her companion.

Proof of this is to be found in the mysterious task to which she devoted herself previous to the publication of the memoirs of Madame Parquin and of which Mademoiselle Masuyer gives us a glimpse.

Under date of May 21, 1836, the latter writes as follows: "We have spoken of Madame d'Abrantès, who aroused dismay by pillorying her acquaintance, and of the *Mémoires Parquin* in which the Queen will express her little dislikes. She would have considered it beneath her dignity to mention them in her own memoirs." [13]

In the same diary, Mademoiselle Masuyer, who acted as the Queen's secretary in connection with these memoirs, refers on several occasions to the importance which Hortense attached to them. On October 19, 1837, two weeks after the death of her mistress, Mademoiselle Masuyer relates that "after lunch the Prince (Louis-Napoleon) having asked me for my notes on the *Mémoires de Madame Parquin,* I brought him the four thick volumes, representing four years' work on my part, for him to burn them. I felt badly about it, I should have like to have kept them." A little further on, Masuyer adds: "The Prince sent the rest of the papers to be burned. I am very much afraid this was not done dis-

[13] Mademoiselle Masuyer, *Revue des Deux Mondes,* November 15, 1915, page 388.

[14] Mademoiselle Masuyer, *Revue des Deux Mondes,* March 1, 1916, page 104.—The publication of the complete text of Mademoiselle Masuyer's Memoirs will presumably solve the little problem we bring up here. At all

creetly. Till the Last Judgment I shall always deny having had anything to do with these memoirs." [14]

Does this refer to the rough draft of the four volumes bearing Mademoiselle Cochelet's name as author which appeared in 1836 and 1837? Was the Queen preparing other extracts revised and edited from the papers belonging to her companion? The first hypothesis seems the more plausible but, be that as it may, it cannot be denied that in the memoirs published under the name of Louise, there were a great many pages in which the Queen said herself what she wished to have said.

We may also mention that a biographical notice on Prince Napoleon-Louis, who died at Forli, appeared in 1831 bearing the signature of H. de Roccaserra. It was really written by Hortense, who had composed it the day after the death of her son. On March 29, indiscreet Mademoiselle Masuyer writing from Ancona says: "Roccaserra has left, taking with him a copy of the notice she wrote about her son. He will have it printed in Corsica, and we shall do so in France." [15]

events, Quérard is mistaken according to the evidence on hand when he indicates Frédéric Lacroix as the presumed author of the Memoirs of Mademoiselle Cochelet.

[15] Mademoiselle Masuyer, *Revue des Deux Mondes,* November 15, 1914, page 232. This article was printed in Corfu on April 15, 1831. It seems to have been rather widely distributed under the Second Empire, as it is quoted by all the biographers who at that time spoke of the Queen. Today it has totally disappeared. We have been unable to find it in any library in Paris, not even the Bibliothèque Nationale, not even in the collection of Monsieur Frédéric Masson, nor in the Library of Ajaccio. The Prince Napoleon did not have a copy. Nor have we found any trace either of any French edition unless it be the same as a plain single sheet of paper in-quarto, printed on both sides, with place or date of publication, and bearing no indication of the publisher, entitled *Notice sur Napoléon-Louis Bonaparte, traduite de l'italien.* The copy of this broadside, which we had in our hands, came from the papers of the Empress Eugénie.

Still, according to Masuyer, Hortense during her stay in England wrote "an article to be published in a newspaper" (*Revue des Deux Mondes,* June 15, 1915, page 865). She must have prepared similar articles on several occasions, for a certain number of notes on political matters, written in her handwriting and preserved in Prince Napoleon's archives, appear to be preliminary outlines for such articles.

II

Queen Hortense wrote her recollections herself, on sheets of letter paper of the size generally used at that time, 13½ centimeters by 20 centimeters (5 by 8 inches), or other loose leaves. Some of these sheets, bearing many words scratched out, have been preserved, but the larger portion has disappeared. Prince Napoleon's archives fortunately, however, contain four copies, some of them complete, the others unfinished or abridged.

The principal copy is dated "Augsburg, 1820." It is signed at the bottom of the last page by the Queen and is entirely written by Mademoiselle Elisa de Courtin, who took a position with the Queen in 1815, at the beginning of the second Restoration, and did not leave her again till her own marriage with Casimir Delavigne, which was celebrated in Paris on November 1, 1830. The copy fills a large account-book, bound in large-grained red morocco, 24 centimeters by 1.315 (9¼ by 14 inches). The front and back covers of this volume, in addition to a border of vine-tendrils, grapes and wheat-ears, have in the middle a gilded "H" surmounted by the imperial crown. The side, without lettering, is covered with squares (*quadrilles*) and various ornaments. Inside, each sheet has wide margins on the right and left of the text. These margins are frequently covered with notes, some of them written by the Queen, others by Madame Salvage.[16] These notes and additions are the result of

[16] Monsieur Raoul Bonnet, whose authority in the matter of autographs and general scholarship is widely known and appreciated, has, with a kindness for which we are infinitely grateful, after a minute examination of the handwritings and a comparison between them and manuscripts of documents of whose origin we are certain, confirmed all the conclusions herewith presented. His help had been precious in clearing up points we were anxious to elucidate and in eliminating any chance of error. The notes written by Madame Salvage are copies of notes written by the Queen on the other manuscripts, of which we will speak presently, or on loose leaves which have remained attached to these manuscripts.

successive revisions carried out by the Queen from 1830 on. No title appears on the (*page de garde*) bastard title-page. This manuscript, which without question may be considered the most complete and the most carefully revised, has 550 pages.

A second copy, executed about the same time, perhaps even earlier, was written by a secretary who, to all appearances, belonged to the Queen's immediate household. We have not, however, been able to identify him sufficiently accurately to feel justified in mentioning any name. For the safeguarding of this reproduction two blank-books had been prepared, likewise bound in long grained morocco, 25 centimeters by 20 centimeters (10 by 8 inches). Only the first one was used. The blank-books are decorated on the front and back covers with an "H" beneath an imperial crown, and the borders of these covers are in a frame (*rais de coeur*) with a conventionalized heart pattern. The side is covered with a gilded checker-board pattern (*quadrilles*); in the middle they have only the inscription *Tom. I.* or *Tom. II.* The person who did the copying stopped abruptly in the middle of the first of these volumes at a passage which corresponds to page 177 in the preceding manuscript. On the fly-leaf is written: *Mémoires de Hortense-Eugénie de Beauharnais, Reine de Hollande, Duchesse de Saint-Leu.* At the time of the later revisions the Queen evidently worked on this document for, on the sides of the pages, are numerous additions, all in her handwriting. The majority of these additions were reproduced by Madame Salvage on the principal manuscript, but one can find some exceptions to this rule.

The archives of Prince Napoleon contain two other copies of the memoirs.

The first of these is entirely written by Madame Salvage de Faverolles, who attached herself to the fortunes of the exiled Queen at quite a late date. They are written on 176 loose leaves of large format, and the copying

was certainly done after 1830, as the additions to the preceding copies, such as the one referring to Bourrienne's *Mémoires,* which could not have been composed until after that date, appear in the proper place. This copy almost entirely conforms to the first manuscript. At the same time a certain number of pages relating to the home life of the Queen have been eliminated. Perhaps this copy was prepared by the Queen to present her recollections to her friends without disclosing to them all her secrets. Here again there are sentences and paragraphs added by the Queen which are in her handwriting.

Finally, the last copy, also in the writing of Madame Salvage, is on loose sheets of letter-paper stamped with her monogram D.S. (Dumorey Salvage) and comprises 604 four-page sheets. Two of these sheets have been lost. Her Majesty the Empress Eugénie replaced them by a copy which she made herself of the missing passages. The text is the practically exact reproduction of the manuscript first described, except for a few modifications, mostly simply questions of form. We have paid no attention to them as these corrections appeared to us to be due entirely to the person who did the copying. The document, on which one finds no traces of the Queen's intervention, was also made at a date posterior to 1830.[17]

[17] For the convenience of the reader we have adopted the following titles referring to these four manuscripts. The first, most complete one is called "Red Manuscript"; the second is called the "Manuscript in two volumes" or "second manuscript"; the third the "Green Manuscript" on account of the color of the case in which it is kept; the fourth the "Salvage Manuscript." At the time of the publication of selections from the memoirs in the *Revue des Deux Mondes,* circumstances and the death of Prince Napoleon not having allowed us a minute examination of the various manuscripts we could not state with certainty who made the copies. Since then, thanks to the kindness of her Royal and Imperial Highness the Princess Napoleon, we have had time to study carefully the originals. At the same time the discovery of letters by Mademoiselle de Courtin and by Madame Salvage have, thanks to the help of Messieurs Noël Charavay and Raoul Bonnet, caused our last doubts to vanish.

III

The Queen till the time of her death, which occurred on October 5, 1837, enjoyed reading her memoirs to the friends who had remained faithful to her in her exile and to distinguished guests who paid homage to her in her misfortune.

Already in 1821, as we have pointed out, Buchon had been the first person privileged to hear certain selections possessing the highest historic interest.[18] One after another Chateaubriand, Madame Récamier, Casimir Delavigne, Alexandre Dumas, Madame Campan, Coulmann and many others had enjoyed the same privilege.

When the Queen became aware that her sufferings were drawing to a close she took care not to forget these precious secrets. On April 3, 1837, fearing the results of an operation which Lisfranc did not dare perform, she drew up her will. At that moment she had no hope of seeing again Prince Louis-Napoleon, whom the French Government following his unsuccessful adventure at Strassburg had sent to America. Consequently Hortense included among her last wishes the sentence, "Madame Salvage shall preserve my memoirs until she is able to hand them back to my son."

There can be no doubt that Madame Salvage de Faverolles, whose devotion to her sovereign is well known, performed faithfully and at the earliest opportunity the mission entrusted to her. Moreover the return of the Prince to his mother's bedside, two months before the Queen breathed her last, reduced considerably the rôle and powers of the testamentary executor.

Monsieur Fourmestraux[19] says, however, that Madame Salvage kept the manuscript and confided it before she

[18] Buchon, *loc. cit.*, page 149.

[19] Eugène Fourmestraux, *La Reine Hortense,* Paris, Paul Dupont, 1867, octavo, page 261.

died to Mademoiselle Masuyer with instruction to restore it to Prince Louis. This delay in carrying out the Queen's wishes is the less easy to explain as by his mother's will the future Napoleon III knew of the existence of the manuscript. Perhaps Fourmestraux is alluding to the last copy made by Madame Salvage without the Queen's knowledge or consent and which she lacked the courage to give up sooner.

Be that as it may, Napoleon III took possession of the mémoirs. He read them and reread them. The notes in his handwriting on the Red Manuscript leave no doubt of that fact. After his death Empress Eugénie preserved them. The pains she herself took to replace the sheets missing from one of the copies prove the interest with which she regarded this relic. Following the death of the Empress the different manuscripts were placed in the archives of Prince Napoleon, who decided to have their text published.[20]

IV

The Prince was preparing this edition when a mortal disease carried him off prematurely from the respect and affection of his faithful followers and from the admiration of those who had the honor of sharing his labors. In the performance of this task he displayed the characteristic qualities of order and method, the passion which

[20] Previous to being placed in the archives of Prince Napoleon these manuscripts were shown either completely or partially to various people. Mr. Blanchard Jerrold seems to have had them loaned him by Napoleon III when he was writing his important work *The Life of Napoleon III.* Monsieur Henry Houssaye was acquainted with at least the parts dealing with the period immediately after Waterloo and he makes quotations—which incidentally are not correct—from them. Houssaye refers to them as the *Mémoires* of Madame de X. Monsieur Frédéric Masson also knew at least partially Hortense's text and he says: "What a shame it is that it is impossible to publish the memoirs in which the Queen reveals, explains, comments on and justifies her mistakes. Such a publication would be the best apologia possible for her." (*Napoleon et sa famille,* Paris, Ollendorf, 1897-1919, 13 vols. octavo, Vol. VIII, page 180.)

filled his heart for everything that concerned the glory of France and the knowledge and understanding of all historical events great and small due to his long and studious researches.

Although the Prince did not live to see the fulfilment of his last wishes his desires have nevertheless been followed respectfully and completely executed.

In accordance with his express desires the present edition is entirely unabridged with the exception of three bits of sentences, one consisting of four, another of three lines, and the third of six words, which he in his wisdom had considered should be suppressed on the ground of propriety. These passages moreover have nothing to do with the private life of the Emperor, the vivid description of which forms the principal attraction of the pages written by his stepdaughter.

The text reproduced is that of the volume which we have called the Red Manuscript. When necessary additions have been made to it by inserting passages from the other manuscripts which do not appear in the first-mentioned version, care has been taken to call these additions to the attention of the reader.

The narrative of the Duchesse de Saint-Leu in all these copies is an uninterrupted one, without divisions into chapters. It has seemed possible without betraying the intentions of the author to make these divisions for the purposes of greater clarity.

In presenting to the public the *Memoirs of Queen Hortense* exactly as she recorded them, in exposing it to scholars—with an intrinsic and absolute respect for the integral historical accuracy of the text—these intimate revelations as set down by her royal hand, Prince Napoleon did a service not only to history but also to the memory of a princess too often harshly criticized, eminently French in her heart and mind, to the memory of an unfortunate Queen, to the memory of an exquisite woman.

Like the Emperor, one of whose shadows she was and

whose touching and affectionate farewell smile she received as he was leaving France for the last time, the Queen of Holland has nothing to lose by having all her acts and even her mistakes fully revealed.

This becomes very clear as one peruses these volumes where she took care not to avoid any of the difficulties of her task. She knew what society said about her; she was aware of the reproaches, justified and unjustified, of which she was the object. Frequently, reading between the lines one is conscious of the care her pen took to refute certain implications, sometimes with disdain but never without courage.

It only remains for the humble collaborator whom Prince Napoleon was good enough to associate with him in his labors, to express the deep gratitude he bears towards him who nobly and fittingly bore a name so burdened with a glorious tradition.

In questions of research, in the sometimes delicate task of preparing the notes, the unalterable good sense of the Prince, his firmly grounded knowledge, his conscientiousness and fairness, his unequaled tact were infallible guides which his constant kindness made easy to follow.

The author of these lines, who fervently carried on a task joyfully begun, found after the cruel loss of May 3, 1926, a no less precious aid, a no less accomplished leader in the person of her Imperial and Royal Highness Princess Napoleon. Having unceasingly shared the labors of her august spouse she took up the pen that had fallen from his fingers and completed the undertaking he had commenced. But will she allow us to say more regarding her share in a work which was one of the last enterprises of the great Frenchman who has died?

JEAN HANOTEAU.

Paris, February 8, 1927
One hundred and twentieth anniversary of the Battle of Eylau.

We cannot refrain from expressing our gratitude for the aid we received during the course of our work. We must not forget Monsieur René Doumic of the Académie Française, who offered the more important parts of these memoirs the hospitality of the *Revue des Deux Mondes;* Monsieur le Vicomte Emmanuel d'Harcourt, custodian of the papers left by his grandfather, the Comte de Sainte-Aulaire, in which we found so much curious material; Madame Bernard du Closel, born de Las Cases, that name which is a synonym of faithfulness, who offered us the rich archives left by her uncle; Madame la Baronne de Beauverger, born Clary, who allowed us to use the autograph letters of the Queen which form part of her family treasures; Monsieur Émile Brouwet, the erudite collector whose knowledge is always at the disposal of research workers; Monsieur Jean Bourguignon, the highly competent curator of Malmaison so rich in memories of Hortense; Monsieur Maurice Dumolin, to whom one is obliged to refer every time one encounters some delicate problem connected with the topography of Old Paris; Monsieur Noël Charavay, whose helpfulness is only equaled by his knowledge; Monsieur Paul Marmottan, so well informed about everything having to do with the days of the Empire, who has allowed us to draw on his precious collections; Colonel Reboul and his wife, by whom our investigations in Holland were greatly facilitated; finally Monsieur Paul Hallynck, who has guided and advised us with a loyal spirit of friendship which we thoroughly reciprocate.

We also wish to thank the Princess de la Moskowa, born Princess Bonaparte, and the Prince de la Moskowa, thanks to whom we were able to complete our iconography; Monsieur Meyer who allowed us to reproduce the portrait of the Queen by Baron Regnault; Messieurs Jean Guiffrey, curator of paintings at the Louvre; André

Pératé, curator of paintings at Versailles; Joseph Durieux, Maurice Levert, Ferdinand Bac, Doctor Cabanès, the Comte de Toulgoët-Treanna, and Henri Malo.

J. H.

NOTE: Numerals in the text indicate notes at the end of the volume.

The Memoirs of
Queen Hortense

CHAPTER I

EARLY CHILDHOOD: THE REVOLUTION: THE REIGN OF TERROR (1783-1794)

Parentage—Earliest Memories—Visit to Martinique—Mistaken Philanthropy—Flight to France—In Paris during the Revolution—The Arrest of Josephine and Beauharnais—Revolutionary Festivities—An Alarming Encounter—The Fête of the Supreme Being—The Execution of Alexandre de Beauharnais.

MY life has been so varied, it has been so crowded with honors, so filled with misfortunes that it has become a subject of public interest. Some people have praised me unduly, others blamed me unjustly, few have really known me. This was on account of my social position, which limited the number of those who could come directly in contact with me. In view of all this I feel I am entitled to demand a fair trial without favor but also without prejudice.

All my actions, great and small, have been prompted by my feelings, by my heart. If the heart be pure can one do wrong? My love for everything that is fine, that is worth while, has supported me in the midst of my defeats and misfortunes. This feeling has been my strength and my comfort at all times.

The following pages are not intended for the crowd. They are addressed to a few sensitive and understanding souls. It is by these I wish my conduct to be judged. To them I shall show myself in my true colors. I say to this little group of friends, "This is my real life.

Study me, pity me, love me, admire me. I feel the need of arousing these emotions. They will form the charm of my declining years." Thus the only audience I seek is one composed of friends.

My brother Eugène knows me too well to need any explanations of my actions. What thought has traversed my mind which I have not shared with him? Our tender affection for one another has made me confide to him every one of my emotions. As for my children it is not from me that they should learn the unhappiness their father caused me. I have suffered so much for their sake, I have cherished them so dearly that when they know the truth they will only love me the more. As far as I myself am concerned, while the writing of these memoirs may prove painful since they will remind me that what should have been the happiest years of my life were full of sorrows and trials, at the same time I shall find satisfaction in recalling the little good I have been able to perform.

My grandfather the Marquis de Beauharnais was Governor General of the French colonies in the West Indies.[1] While living at Martinique he became intimate with the family of the Counts Tascher de La Pagerie, who were originally from near Blois in Touraine, but who had settled in the West Indies and owned important estates there. The Marquis de Beauharnais married Mademoiselle de Chastullé, a rich heiress owning considerable property on the island of Santo Domingo, and had two sons by his marriage.[2] My father, the younger of the two, was born at Martinique, on the ——,[3] and while still very young returned to France with my grandfather when the latter was recalled from his post.[4]

About the same time one of the Taschers de La Pagerie married a Monsieur Renaudin and also settled in France. In order still further to cement the bonds of friendship uniting the two families, it was decided that my father should marry a member of the same family. When the

ship bearing his request for the hand of the eldest daughter reached Martinique the young lady was dying. Later, when the family in France had asked to have the second sister sent back to Europe for my father, the fact that she had gone into a decline following her sister's death and was afflicted with an incurable disease caused the youngest girl to be selected in her place. Her father accompanied her back to France and she became the Vicomtesse de Beauharnais.[5] The ceremony was performed in Paris on ——.[6] Thus it was chance that directed my mother's fate. Eugène was born in 1781 [7] and I in 1783.[8]

Although my mother's social position was brilliant it was not enough so to make her forget her family ties and the country of her birth. Across the Atlantic still lived her mother,[9] now advanced in years, whom she wished to see at least once more. Then too her wish to leave France may have been stimulated by a certain feeling of resentment toward my father, a resentment easy to understand but difficult to overcome. The latter, handsome in person, highly cultured in mind, was greatly sought after by the most prominent people of both sexes at court and in society. My mother's oversensitive nature took offense at this excessive popularity. Indeed she became actually jealous and felt that distance and separation would prove the best remedies.

My mother and I sailed alone.[10] I was four years old at the time. We embarked at Havre. Hardly had we left port when a violent squall threatened to capsize our vessel. On arriving at Martinique we were received by my mother's family with transports of joy. We led a quiet life, visiting now at one plantation, now at another. My mother enjoyed our stay, and we returned to France only after three years.

I can recall only one particular incident of our stay at Martinique, but this registered itself on my imagination vividly. I was five years old at the time and

had never known what it was to shed a tear. Everybody had spoiled me, and never had one of my wishes or impulses been thwarted or rebuked. One day, while living on my grandmother's plantation, I was playing beside a table on which she was counting money. Now and then a coin fell to the floor, and I hastened to pick it up and give it back to her. I noticed she made a dozen or more piles of big copper pennies which she placed on a chair when she left the room, taking the rest of the money with her.

In some way I cannot describe, the idea came to me that these pennies were intended for me, to do what I pleased with. I was absolutely convinced of the fact, and gathered the separate piles into my skirt, which I tucked up so as to form a sort of pocket. Having done this I set out with my treasure-trove perfectly free from any qualm of conscience, so firmly was I convinced that the money really belonged to me. Going to one of the mulatto house-servants I announced, "John, look at all this money granny gave me for the poor black people. Take me round to their cabins so I can give it to them." The heat was terrific as the sun was still high, but so keen was my pleasure I could not bear to wait. John and I discussed the best means of doing the greatest good to the greatest number of poor people. I went from cabin to cabin, my money still in my tucked-up skirt, which I held firmly with one hand, only taking out the sums John had decided I ought to give. My mother's old nurse [11] received a double share.

At length all my money was gone. A crowd of grateful negroes surrounded me kissing my hands and feet and I returned to the house triumphantly, filled with joy at having been the cause of so much happiness. On my arrival I found everything in a state of commotion. My grandmother was looking everywhere for her money. The servants were terrified as no one knew who might be accused. In a flash I realized what I had done and, over-

come with despair, was obliged to admit my guilt. I confessed immediately to my grandmother, but what an agony that confession was. Reproaches were heaped upon me. I was made to feel I had been a liar and a thief.

But it was simply my imagination that had led me astray. I had seen the coppers set aside and heaped up into separate piles and concluded they must be intended for the poor. The money was left on a chair within my reach; consequently I was to take it and distribute it. Out of these fictions I had made a reality. The humiliation I suffered as a result of this incident was so intense that it influenced my character permanently. Ever afterwards I mistrusted my imagination and I believe I can declare sincerely that, since that far-off day, I have never told a lie or even sought to embellish the truth to the slightest degree.

News of the Revolution caused disturbances in the colony. Monsieur de Viomesnil and Monsieur de Damas in turn became governors, but the latter was obliged to leave precipitately. We were living at Government House at the time. One night my mother received word that the cannon of Fort Royal were to open fire on the town the following day. Immediately she arranged to have us taken aboard a frigate whose captain she knew. As we crossed the fields, which are called savannahs, a cannonball fell close behind us. The next day the town was seized by the revolutionists, and the French ships were ordered to return to their anchorage under threat of being fired on by all the guns of the fort. The crew of our vessel announced their intention of returning to France. They carried out their threat and hoisted sail, but as we were leaving the harbor the mutineers fired on us. Thanks to Providence we escaped untouched.

It was in this unexpected and sudden manner we left Martinique. We had not been able to say farewell to any of our dear ones. The frigate on which we found ourselves was called the Sensible. Toulon was her desti-

nation. The crossing was favorable as far as the Straits of Gibraltar. There our pilot made a mistake and steered too near the African coast. We touched bottom. A few instants later the ship was aground. Sailors, passengers and children all tugged at the ropes, and once more we escaped an imminent danger.

On her arrival at Toulon (early in November, 1790) my mother learned for the first time of the events that were disrupting France. The Revolution had broken out, and my father had become a prominent figure of the political party whose doctrines he had espoused. His brother [12] had joined an opposing group, while my grandfather had retired to Fontainebleau accompanied by his old friend Madame Renaudin, one of my mother's aunts. It was to Fontainebleau that she and I went to live. Eugène had been a boarder at the Collège d'Harcourt. He left school and joined us. It was at this period that he and I developed that similarity of tastes and feelings which caused us always to agree in our amusements, our happiness and our misfortune, and to react in the same way to any event affecting our common lot. No premonition warned us of the brilliant but checkered fate that lay before us. Indeed my brother and I felt that considering our extreme youth we had already had more than our share of adventures. We discussed at length the experiences through which we had passed. I described my trip to America, the revolt of the negroes, our hasty departure, the danger we were in when cannon-balls fell all round our frigate and the almost equally great peril that threatened us when our ship almost sank off the African coast. Eugène had not been so far afield. Nor did he foresee that in time Fate would lead him, now through the sands of the desert, now through the icy wastes of Russia. He was still a mere schoolboy, living with a tutor at the Collège d'Harcourt,[13] and he admitted that I had had more thrilling adventures than any he had known.

Yet he too had tales to tell. He described for instance,

with all the vivacity that accompanies our earliest memories, what had befallen him the day of the celebration in honor of the Federation. He and his tutor, the latter wearing the full dress of an abbé, had gone out early in the morning. They intended to visit the Champ de Mars where the festivities were to take place. On the way they found themselves surrounded by a crowd of enthusiastic working-people bound for the same destination and transporting earth and other materials for the construction of the amphitheater which is still in existence. My brother walked beside his tutor, holding the latter's hand. Suddenly six fishwives, who were dragging a little cart, laid hold of the abbé, harnessed him between the shafts, climbed into the cart themselves, and began whipping him to make him haul them along. The aggressors paid no attention to the ecclesiastic's six-year-old companion. Eugène, however, furious at seeing his tutor thus assaulted, rushed to his defense. Seizing an umbrella, the only weapon within his reach, he ran after the car, belaboring with all his might those who came in his way. At the same time, he demanded loudly the release of the tutor. His courageous attitude apparently attracted the attention of some personage possessing authority, who released the victim from his ridiculous position without regard for the tumble the sudden unhitching of their steed might cause the fishwives.

Too young at the time to understand what was going on around us I can only recall a few episodes of the days of the Revolution. At the time of the flight of the King and his arrest at Varennes my father was President of the Constituent Assembly. His firm attitude, the manner in which he maintained order in Paris aroused, for a time, great enthusiasm. Even in our retreat at Fontainebleau whenever people caught sight of my brother and myself looking out of a window there would be cries, "There are our Dauphin and Dauphine." Whenever this occurred we retired hastily, as incapable of understanding the

cause of the demonstration as we were of surmising what the future held in store for us.

At the close of the session of the Constituent Assembly my father left Paris to take over his post with the Army of the North to which he had just been appointed with the title of general. He wished Eugène to return to school. My mother considered the time had come when my education also should be seriously commenced. Madame de Chabrillan, abbess of the convent of the Abbaye aux Bois, was a relative of my family, and it was to her care I was confided.[14] In order that she might see us both more frequently my mother left Fontainebleau and settled in Paris.

At the convent I happened to be the youngest of the boarders. Consequently everyone spoiled me—the abbess, the nuns, my fellow pupils; and in my new surroundings I received the same tender, affectionate care to which my mother, who could not bear to see either of her children unhappy and who was constantly afraid of causing me the slightest sorrow, had accustomed me. Thus my first contact with life encouraged my belief that everything and everybody was delightful. If some involuntary fault on my part provoked a frown or a word of reproof from those about me I sought at once to adopt an attitude that would win their forgiveness. I promised to behave better and did my best to carry out my resolutions.

A few months only had elapsed after my admission to the convent when my mother sent for me. It was the tenth of August (1792). The mob was attacking the Palace of the Tuileries. Paris was in an uproar. On such a day my mother felt she should be with her children. Shortly afterwards the schools and convents were destroyed.

We continued to live with my mother until conditions became so unsettled in France that she decided it was safer for us abroad. The Prince de Salm, who held the same political views as my father, but did not inspire the

same confidence because he was not French, decided to emigrate to England. His sister, the Princess de Hohenzollern, was to accompany him, and it was suggested we should be taken along as their children. The moment my father heard we were leaving the country he dispatched a messenger to the Prince asking him to send us back to Paris. He did not wish us to leave France. The message reached us at Saint-Pol in the Province of Artois where we had stopped for a short time. Had it come two days later we should have been on shipboard. The Prince and Princess brought us back to Paris themselves, and, in spite of her anxiety for our safety, our mother was delighted to see us again.

She was living in retirement at the time, not at all in touch with the people in power, and it was her kind heart which caused her to emerge from her seclusion. She did so on behalf of Madame de Moulins, an old lady of eighty years. The latter called on my mother with the news of the arrest and imprisonment of her niece, a Mademoiselle de Béthisy. The niece was only nineteen, but in spite of her youth the fact she had reentered France from abroad rendered her execution likely, if the case was ever brought to trial. With tears in her eyes the poor old aunt besought my mother to save her niece from certain death. It was useless for my mother to reply she could do nothing, that she had no influence with, and was quite unknown in official circles. Madame de Moulins assured her that a request made by the wife of a general in one of the French armies would meet with a favorable reception. It is always pleasant to feel we can be useful to another human being. My mother called on the various authorities, presented her petition and secured the release of her protégée. It was Tallien who was the most active in assisting my mother. This was the first occasion on which he won our gratitude, which was all the deeper because in those days to help the unfortunate was to risk one's own safety.

In the midst of the upheaval that was taking place in

Paris parents did not find it easy to attend to their children's education, or to select their teachers. It was my mother's companion Mademoiselle de Lannoy who acted as my governess. She belonged to a good family, was well educated and considerably gifted along certain lines. Her lessons should have proved useful to me. Unfortunately her attention was principally absorbed by political matters.

The decree forbidding members of the nobility to hold military commands obliged my father to resign from the Army of the Rhine where he had succeeded Monsieur de Custine [15] as commander-in-chief. He withdrew to his estate at La Ferté-Beauharnais where, after a short time, he was placed under arrest [16] and brought back to the prison of the Carmelites in Paris. My mother, although she went to see all the persons who had helped her in the case of Mademoiselle de Béthisy, was unable even to learn the reasons for his imprisonment. In fact her steps in his behalf resulted in her own arrest, and the only favor she was able to secure was that of being confined in the same prison as her husband.[17]

What intense grief we felt the morning we were told that she had entered our room to bid us farewell. Tears rolled down her cheeks. She had not wished our slumber to be disturbed. "Let them sleep," she said to our governess. "I could not bear the sight of their sorrow. I would not have the strength to part from them." Ah, how tragic an awakening we had! We were alone, separated from both our parents. This was my first encounter with unhappiness.

My brother Eugène in spite of his youth possessed already that energy which is part of a courageous nature. His longing to see our parents was so intense that he was convinced he could make his wish come true. He hurried off to see Tallien and inform him of our misfortune. I waited impatiently to learn the outcome of the interview. It seemed impossible to me that anyone could re-

sist my brother's eloquence. But, alas, he who had helped us before was no longer in a position to do so. Under the menace of terror men's hearts had frozen and become inaccessible to the appeal of justice and pity. Innocence deprived of all her defenders was left to perish.

How true it is that our earliest impressions mark our nature with an indelible stamp and frequently produce beneficial results! The thought of the joy I should have felt on this occasion had my petition [18] been favorably received was what aroused in me a longing to comfort, protect and befriend all those in affliction, in other words that impulse to do good which is the only thing that makes power and position worth having.

Our principal interest now became the daily package we sent the prisoners, in which we included whatever articles they might be in need of. Entrance to their prison was forbidden us. After a short time, we were not allowed to correspond with them. To replace our letters we added to the list of articles included in the package the phrase, "Your children are in good health." The gatekeeper, however, was harsh enough to rub out this remark. In order to circumvent him we took turns in copying the list so that the sight of our two handwritings might assure our parents we were both still alive.

About this time a law passed that all children of noble birth must learn a trade.[19] My brother, in spite of our governess's despair, chose that of a carpenter. Mademoiselle de Lannoy was constantly criticizing the republican form of government; she laid claim to a title at a time when everyone else was concealing his and declared about everything that took place, "A thing like that would never have been allowed to happen under the old régime." Nevertheless, for the sake of our parents she allowed Eugène to go to the carpenter who was near by and take lessons.

His teacher was an ardent Jacobin who with pride displayed as trophy a hammer belonging to Louis XVI

which he had acquired at the sack of the Palace of the Tuileries. With him lived two sisters, former nuns, who were as subdued in their manner as he was violent. In spite of his political views the carpenter was always polite to my brother, and the two sisters used to give Eugène secretly little images of the Virgin and the Saints which he brought delightedly home to me as rewards he had received for his good work.

Although we were no longer living with the Princess de Hohenzollern we went to see her every Sunday. Her brother had been arrested at the same time as our father. In her loneliness and worry she welcomed our presence as a relief. To us, in our isolation, she was a moral support.

It was during this period that orders were given for a patriotic banquet to be held simultaneously all over Paris. On this solemn occasion tables were to be spread in the street, and masters and servants, men, women and children, were to eat side by side regardless of rank. To evade the law was to risk being arrested. In order to make it impossible to disobey this decree everyone had been obliged to inscribe his name on a placard affixed to the main entrance of the house where he lived. It happened that the mansion in which we were staying was nearly deserted. My mother was in prison, and the same fate had befallen an American (West Indian) family who were friends of hers and who also lived there. Our man servant, our chambermaid, the porter and his wife, my brother and I played the landlords on this occasion. My governess, who claimed to belong to the old family of De Lannoy of Flanders, was furious at the idea of being obliged to sit beside the servants and the porter. She, who had been brought up at the Convent of Saint Cloud, who on two occasions had caught a glimpse of the Queen, could not admit such a state of social chaos. Once more, she assured us, "A thing like that would not have been allowed under the old régime." Like any other children

of our age, we were delighted to see our governess humiliated. Moreover, in spite of our youth, both my brother and myself were aware that her ridiculous pretensions might do harm to the cause of our parents.

The table was laid outside the entrance of the house, and we were about to sit down to our meal when we were startled by the cries of some passers-by who addressed us by the terrifying epithet of aristocrats. It seems we were at fault in not placing the table in the middle of the roadway. We hastened to correct this error. The weather was fine. The lights set on the tables, the crowds in the streets, some eating, some strolling about out of curiosity, formed a curious scene. In order to have made it still more brilliant the windows of the houses should have been illuminated, because in the purely residential districts where there were no shops the streets were too dark.

After supper we asked Mademoiselle de Lannoy to take us through some of the other parts of the city that were more crowded and consequently livelier than the neighborhood where we lived (close to the junction of the Boulevard Saint-Germain and the rue Saint-Dominique). In the business section the tables were lined up one after the other. Some of them were decorated with a roof of green boughs. The whole effect was attractive. Nevertheless general gaiety was lacking. Every face wore an expression of uneasiness. Vagabonds in rags wandered about the city drinking and shouting revolutionary songs. They carried terror to the hearts of the peaceable middle class, who were still further alarmed by their bellicose manner. Only in the poorer quarters was any trace of natural high-spirits or spontaneous merrymaking to be found. As we passed, a shoemaker clad in his working clothes rose from his table, came up beside our governess and embraced her. You may be sure she lost no time in taking us back to the house, announcing as she did so, "A thing like that would never have been allowed under the old régime."

My brother as he witnessed the discomfiture of Made-

moiselle de Lannoy glanced at me maliciously, because the good woman was extremely plain. Eugène claimed the shoemaker's action was prompted simply by a desire to correct mademoiselle's haughtiness of bearing.

I said, "I'm very glad to be only a little girl for that horrid man might have tried to kiss me too."

"I would not have allowed him to," answered Eugène, drawing himself up with the full dignity of his twelve years.

I can still remember some of the other festivities of this period. They were planned on a grand scale and were frequently imposing, but in later years I have found the working classes enjoying their pleasures more genuinely than they did during the period of which I am now writing. Although the power wielded by the crowd was very great, it was accompanied by a sense of responsibility and a feeling of uneasiness. Poverty was widespread. The intoxication of the days of the Federation had been replaced by a feeling of alarm and of terror, which ran through all the strata of society. Even those who used fear as a weapon were its victims and frequently were cruel only because they themselves were afraid.

One day, I was returning to the rue Saint-Dominique [20] after paying a visit to the Princess de Hohenzollern. Her youngest chambermaid was with me, my brother having stayed home to study. As we turned a corner we caught sight of a crowd of men advancing toward us to the sounds of loud music. People in the street sought refuge wherever they could. As the crowd approached, doors and windows closed precipitately. Not even the porters put their heads out of the gate to see what was happening. The maid and I were frightened to find ourselves thus absolutely alone in the street. We dared neither advance nor retreat, but huddled under the overhanging porch of a monumental gateway. I never found out where the mob was going. I can only remember seeing a throng of men with bare arms, singing the revolutionary *Ça ira*

and the *Marseillaise,* go past me carrying a statue of Liberty. I was still very young but their wild behavior, even though I did not know its significance, frightened me extremely. I grew more terrified when I saw the mob stop in front of a house directly across the street from where we were. To the accompaniment of savage curses the crowd attempted to break in the doorway and scale the walls. As they did so they accused the owners of the house of being aristocrats and threatened to hang them from the lamp-post. The cause of this outburst was that in passing they had caught sight of a carving of the Virgin on the front of the house. Ladders were quickly obtained from somewhere or other, and the crowd with swords hacked and mutilated the carving. Such behavior profoundly disturbed my religious beliefs. My terror was replaced by a feeling of commiseration for the unfortunate beings who by committing such an act had incurred the dire penalties that Providence would certainly inflict. My pious imagination pictured these chastisements in detail, and I pitied those upon whom they were about to fall. Finally the mob continued on its way, but instead of going to meet my brother I returned to the house of the Princess de Hohenzollern and told her what I had just seen. The Princess scolded me for having gone out with the youngest chambermaid for it was always the eldest one who was supposed to take me home.

There was a Revolutionary guard stationed at the Princess's house. She had under her care her nephew the Prince of Salm and a young English girl whom she was bringing up. The four of us were too young to understand the events that were going on about us, and we used to laugh and play on the terrace of Salm palace [at present the Chancellerie of the Légion d'Honneur, Quai d'Orsay—*Translator*] with all the unconcern of youth. Yet, daily at a certain hour, when we caught sight in the distance of crowds gathering on the Place Louis XV around a structure we knew to be a scaffold [21] we would

hang our heads, look away and reenter the house heavy at heart. Nor could we restrain the flood of tears when we thought of the unfortunates whose last hour had come. Little did we imagine, however, that our parents might some day suffer the same fate. Convinced of their innocence we waited impatiently the moment of their release.

It was during this period that the Princess de Hohenzollern suffered a loss which further increased her fears for the safety of those who were especially dear to us. She had offered the hospitality of the Salm mansion to a young Polish woman, the Princess Lubomirska, twenty-four years of age and very beautiful. Acting with the thoughtlessness that characterizes youth, the latter had, presumably, made remarks criticizing the government then in power. She was arrested and immediately executed.

One of the ceremonies which took place during the Revolution and which I remember particularly well was the Feast of the Supreme Being, which was held on Sunday, June 8, 1794. Acting at the suggestion of Robespierre, the Convention had officially recognized the existence of a Supreme Being and the Immortality of the Soul. A day was set apart for the celebration of this event. The announcement was received with satisfaction by all the people we knew. Our writing teacher was an ardent Jacobin, our professor of history and foreign languages a no less fervent royalist, but both at this time regarded Robespierre with an equal degree of admiration in spite of the difference of their political views. Robespierre was then President of the Convention. It was rumored that, taking advantage of the celebration, he was to proclaim himself king, free all the prisoners and reestablish peace, order and religion.

I can remember that everyone looked forward to the festive day as bringing with it the end of all our troubles.

In spite of the existing financial crises we did not suffer from lack of funds. Every month, Monsieur Henry, a

banker in Dunkirk,[22] sent us a certain fixed allowance which he afterwards drew, through London, on my grandmother, who still retained possession of her plantation in Martinique. This arrangement allowed our governess even during our parents' absence to provide us with all the comforts to which we had been accustomed.

The day of the celebration at last arrived. To attend the ceremony, I dressed in a white linen frock with a large blue belt. My curly hair fell loosely over my shoulders. As she dressed me the maid said, "You must look very, very pretty today for perhaps we shall get word your father and mother are to be let out of prison and you will be allowed to see them and give them a kiss." The idea of this possibility made me almost mad with delight.

On arriving at the Tuileries we saw the members of the Convention file down a long wooden staircase that had been erected near the central hall and led to the garden. All were in full dress.

In front of the rest came a single figure conspicuous from the fact that he alone had his hair powdered. "That is Robespierre," cried the crowd. "He is the only deputy who powders his hair. Listen, listen to what he will say." We could not hear a word. The deputies approached the great central basin in the garden, which had been drained dry. In it had been placed various wooden statues representing Atheism and other false doctrines. These had been surrounded with inflammable material. A lighted torch was handed Robespierre. With it he set fire to the structure. In an instant everything had been destroyed, and a mass of smoke and flame rose skyward.

A lighted spark fell on my dress, burning my chest. My linen frock caught fire, and it was only with difficulty that the flames were extinguished, and I was carried back to where we lived. To add to my suffering nothing was said about freeing the prisoners. Thus it was in pain and anguish that I ended a day I had looked forward to with joyous anticipation.

One day a woman we did not know called at our house and wished to have us accompany her but without giving any further details. Mademoiselle de Lannoy objected. Thereupon the woman produced a note in my mother's handwriting giving us permission to go with the stranger. After further hesitation, as she feared a trap, our governess yielded reluctantly.

The woman led us to a garden situated in the rue de Sèvres.[23] Telling us not to make a sound she let us into the gardener's cottage. Opposite there was a big building. A window opened and my father and mother appeared. Filled with surprise and delight I uttered a cry and stretched out my arms toward my parents. They made me a sign not to speak, but a sentinel on duty at the foot of the wall had heard us and gave the alarm. The unknown woman hurried us away. We learned later that the window of the prison had been pitilessly walled up. It was the last time I ever saw my father. A few days later he was no more.[24]

A few moments before his execution my father wrote my mother the following letter,[25] a last testimonial of his affection for us and his devotion to his country.

4th Thermidor in the Second year of
the Republic, one and indivisible.

All the evidence given at the so-called examinations which have been today inflicted on a number of prisoners shows that I am the victim of foul calumnies spread by certain aristocrats who pretend to be patriots and are now confined here. The knowledge that this infernal conspiracy will not cease until it has brought me before the revolutionary tribunal deprives me of any hope of ever seeing you again, my friend, or of ever again embracing my children. I will not dwell on my regrets; my warm affection for my children, the brotherly fondness I have for you must convince you of my feelings in this respect.

I grieve also to leave a land I love, for which I would willingly have laid down my life a thousand times over. Not only can I no longer serve France but the manner

of my death makes me appear an unworthy citizen. This torturing thought forbids me to beg you to cherish my memory. Try however to rehabilitate it. Prove that, in the eyes of all men, a lifetime spent in serving our country's cause and in assuring the triumph of liberty and justice should outweigh the slanderous accusations of a few individuals, most of whom belong to classes we rightly look upon with suspicion. Yet this task of yours must not be undertaken immediately, for in the midst of revolutionary struggles a great nation seeking to pulverize its chains must be ever watchful and be more afraid to spare a guilty man than to punish unjustly an innocent one.

I die not only with that calmness of mind which in spite of everything allows us to think fondly of our dear ones, but also with that courage which animates a man who recognizes no master, whose conscience is clear, whose spirit is upright, whose most ardent wish is the prosperity of the Republic.

Good-by, dear friend. Console yourself for the sake of our children. Console them by enlightening their minds, and above all by teaching them that by their courage and patriotism they may efface from my name the blot of my execution and remind the world of my deeds and my claims to our nation's gratitude. Good-by. You know those who are dear to me; be a consolation to them, and by your care prolong my life in their hearts. Good-by. I press you and my dear children for the last time to my breast.

ALEXANDRE B.

I cannot express my grief at the loss of my beloved father. The memory of it will never leave me, and only time has diminished the intensity of the emotion his horrible death aroused.

In addition to this calamity we were harassed by other alarms. The Princess de Hohenzollern was as distracted with grief as we were ourselves. Her brother the Prince de Salm had perished the same day as my father. We spent our days with her, sharing each other's sorrow. The Princess had only one desire: to leave France. She

prayed never to see again the country where she had been brought up, which had become so dear to her, but where she had suffered so cruel a loss.

There were rumors that the children of persons who had perished on the scaffold were to be arrested. My brother considered himself as the natural protector not only of me but also of my mother. Despite his youth he already showed that decision of character and calmness in the face of danger which he displayed afterwards.

"Don't worry," he would say to me. "I'll never abandon you. I won't allow you to be taken away. I'm going to enlist. When I'm a soldier no one will dare touch my sister or my mother. While I'm off with the army and until our mother comes back you can live at La Ferté-Beauharnais."

"Go and live all alone without you!" I exclaimed. "I'd never dare do that."

"Well, then, come along with me. You won't be afraid of the shooting, will you?"

"No, I promise you I won't," I answered bravely.

Thus our childish plans, which we considered so easy to carry out, helped reassure us and drove away our fears. But they were unable to dissipate our sorrow for our loss or our anxiety over our mother's fate. She was to have been executed at the same time as my father, but when she heard her name called she fell in a swoon and when she revived was so weak that it was impossible even to carry her. "We'll take her some other time," declared the men charged with collecting those to be taken to the scaffold.[26] This took place on the 5th Thermidor [July, 1794]. Four days later the fall of Robespierre put an end to the execution and saved our mother.

CHAPTER II

IN THE DAYS OF THE DIRECTORY (1794-1799)

Josephine's Release—General Hoche and Eugène—Life at Boarding-School—A Dinner with Barras—First Meeting with Napoleon—Bonaparte's Courtship—Josephine's Marriage—Following the Italian Campaign—Family Alliances—News from Egypt—The Return of Bonaparte—The 18th Brumaire (Establishment of the Consulate).

THE reign of Robespierre was over, but mother had not yet been released, when we received the visit of the celebrated beauty Madame de Fontenay, who later became Madame Tallien. Our visitor petted us and encouraged us with promises that mother would soon be with us again. This indeed happened a few days afterwards.[1] Tallien had been active in bringing about her release, using his influence to the best advantage. When, afterwards, he asked mother as a favor to receive the woman he had just married and who was attracting a somewhat undesirable amount of attention, could she do otherwise than comply with his request?

General Hoche had been a friend of my father. He had shared his captivity and nearly suffered the same fate, escaping only by a curious accident. In order to increase the number of executions the authorities were in the habit of implicating a certain number of prisoners in imaginary conspiracies among themselves. Instead of being placed with the other prisoners, Hoche as a measure of special severity had been condemned to solitary confinement; hence no charge of this sort could be brought against him. It was to this he owed his life. On his release, after the 9th Thermidor, he resumed his rank, sent for Eugène and took the latter with him when he was appointed commander of the Army of the Vendée. Hoche

believed that one cannot begin too soon to form a man's character. Although Eugène was only thirteen at the time, the General treated him exactly as he would have any other orderly, did not spare him any fatigue and exposed him to every danger. This was the beginning of my brother's military career. It was at this rough school that he became acquainted with the soldiers' ways and learned how to make himself popular with them.

But what the General considered merely part of a useful education filled my mother with alarm. Moreover, Eugène had not completed his regular studies. He was therefore recalled from the army, and he and I were placed at two boarding-schools that had just been opened at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. The one I entered was presided over by Madame Campan, formerly first lady in waiting to Marie Antoinette. Ruined by the fall of her royal mistress, without influence or means but possessing lofty ideals, Madame Campan sought by the use of her superior intelligence and fine mind to earn her livelihood and retain her independence.

Such was the woman to whose care I was now confided and who devoted herself to me with all of a mother's affection and understanding. More anxious to develop our spiritual natures than merely to cultivate such natural accomplishments as we happened to possess she nevertheless pointed out constantly, by striking examples, the uses we could make of the latter. The misfortunes that befell Marie Antoinette and to which Madame Campan often referred made a deep impression on me. I was particularly struck to discover the amount of harm that can be done through malicious gossip and to note what changes of fortune may befall even persons of the highest rank. The conduct of certain Frenchmen who had sought refuge abroad and who, while there, were willing to stoop to begging rather than earn a living by honest toil taught me another lesson. I felt that to be truly independent one must first acquire those things that insure this independ-

ence, in other words, strength of character and a sound education.

I sought earnestly to develop these qualities although handicapped by a too great natural facility of execution which interfered with serious concentration.

But I was the more assiduous in my efforts as my mind was constantly haunted by the thought of my mother's captivity and my father's tragic fate. My imagination was still so dominated by these memories that I constantly felt a menace suspended over me. The thought of being able to overcome it filled me with delight, and I rejoiced in the idea that no matter what Fate might have in store for me I should never stoop or humiliate myself.

But the future did not always wear such a gloomy aspect. Adèle Auguié, niece of Madame Campan, a girl of my own age with a divinely sweet disposition, had become my closest friend, the depositary of my innermost thoughts. To her I described the romance of my life as it was to be in the days to come.

"I intend to be happy," I used to say, "for I shall be ready to meet whatever may befall me. My ambition is to acquire moral courage. Armed with that one need fear nothing. I want my husband, whoever he may be, to love me. To win his affection I shall educate myself in such a way that if he proves too worldly I shall know how to make him more serious-minded, if he is jealous, I shall be ready to sacrifice all social pleasures for his sake. In short I shall cure him, whatever ailment he may have."

We spent the greater part of our recesses in such conversation, and as I grew older these ideas became more and more firmly fixed in my mind. Although less high-strung than I, my friend came to share my views. I had preached them with all the fervor of my convictions till she had adopted them as her own.

It is with pleasure I dwell on these early years, the only happy days I ever had. Never again did I wield as absolute a power as that which my schoolfellows con-

ferred upon me. Why did they do so? They could not surmise the rank my family later would occupy. Was it because certain natural gifts attract as much attention at boarding-school as they do in society? Was it because I was more advanced than the others in my studies, first in music, in drawing, in dancing, the fastest runner, the best at games as well as in the classroom? No, I believe I owed my popularity, the sort of suzerainty I possessed, to my constant, all-absorbing desire to be loved, a desire which expressed itself in every one of my actions. I was so afraid of creating jealousy that I sought to conceal anything that made me look superior to the rest. For instance, I had at boarding-school a very beautiful lace veil. Not only would I not wear it, but I would not even let my fellow pupils see it for fear it might make them envious.

I disliked having the teacher hold me up as a model and was tempted to make a deliberate mistake so that the other girl might not feel humiliated. At any rate I always found an excuse for her. I was frequently called upon to decide controversies between two of my comrades, and my verdict was received with respect. If a new girl entered the school who was awkward in her behavior and was made fun of by the other pupils I would take her under my protection and at once the teasing would stop.

Each girl was supposed to take her turn in keeping the classroom neat and tidy. I was anxious to do my share, but whenever my turn came the other girls struggled to be allowed to do my work for me. It was considered a privilege. This general admiration was very dear to me, but perhaps it caused me to become too accustomed to being sincerely liked and admired. What a disappointment it is when we realize that the people about us are generally hypocrites. This is especially true if your nature is too sensitive not to be hurt by that casual attitude which criticizes without taking the trouble to understand,

or that malicious spirit which condemns unjustly. I can declare, however, that the fact of being admittedly a favorite at school aroused in me only an overmastering desire to deserve this popularity. Later this wish to be liked did me harm, for having acted as I thought for the best, I could not understand why I did not receive the praise I felt was due me.

My mother had put us in school but she could not bear not to see us often and very frequently we were sent to Paris. During one of these trips she informed us she was dining with the Director Barras, and that we were to accompany her.

"Is it possible, mother," I exclaimed impetuously, "you actually associate with such people? Have you forgotten our family misfortunes?"

"My daughter," she answered with that angelic gentleness which never left her, "you must consider the fact that since your father's death I have been obliged to attempt to save as much of his fortune as possible in order that it should not be lost to you. Should I be ungrateful toward those who have helped and protected me?" [2]

I recognized that I was wrong. I begged my mother's pardon and went with her to the Directory established in the Palace of the Luxembourg. Barras had invited a number of guests, of whom Tallien and his wife were the only ones I knew. At the dinner table I found myself placed between my mother and a general who, in order to talk to her, kept leaning forward so often and with so much vivacity that he tired me and I was forced to push back my chair. I thus found myself obliged to examine closely his countenance, which was handsome, very expressive, but remarkably pale. He spoke with great animation and apparently devoted his entire attention to my mother. It was General Bonaparte, and his interest in her was due to an incident which I must relate.[3]

Following the riots on the 13th Vendémiaire [October 4, 1795] a law was passed forbidding any private citizen

to have weapons in his house.[4] My brother, unable to bear the thought of surrendering the sword that had belonged to his father, hurried off to see General Bonaparte, who at that time was in command of the troops stationed in Paris. He told the General he would kill himself rather than give up the sword. The General, touched by his emotion, granted his request and at the same time asked the name of his mother, saying he would be glad to meet a woman who could inspire her son with such ideals.

Whatever might have been the cause, the General's very evident interest in my mother reminded me that she might some day remarry. This idea was painful to me. As I told my brother with whom I discussed the matter, "She won't love us as much as she does now."

When the General called at our house he felt the coolness of our reception. He did his best to change our attitude, but his method with me did not succeed. He tried to tease me, making fun of women in general, and the more vigorously I defended my sex the more violently he attacked it. I was about to be confirmed. The General declared I was bigoted. When I answered, "You were confirmed. Why shouldn't I be?" he laughed at having roused my temper. I, not guessing he was doing this only in jest, replied seriously to all his remarks and took a dislike to him.

Every time I came to Paris from Saint-Germain I found him more assiduous in his attentions to my mother. He had become the center of her little group of friends, which included Madame de Lameth, Madame d'Aiguillon, Madame de la Galissonnière, Madame Tallien and several men. The General's conversation was always worth listening to. He even managed to make the ghost stories he occasionally told interesting by the way in which he related them. Indeed he was so openly admired by the little group that I could not refrain from informing my mother of my fears. She only combated them half-heartedly. I wept as I begged her not to remarry,

or at least not to choose a man whose rank would separate her from us. But already the General's will had more weight than mine. I know however that my grief caused my mother to hesitate for some time. She did not yield until she saw the General about to leave without her. He had been appointed commander-in-chief of the army in Italy. She loved him and could not bear the thought of giving him up. Finally she consented to become his wife.

It was Madame Campan who broke the news. Our mother, aware of the sorrow it would cause me, did not dare to do so herself. As a matter of fact, I felt very badly about it. Madame Campan attempted to quiet me, pointing out how this marriage would help my brother's career. He looked forward to being a soldier and could not be one under better auspices than those of a general who was also his stepfather. Moreover, the General had not been implicated in the horrors of the Revolution. On the contrary he had suffered by it. His family was an old one, honorably known in Corsica. In every respect the marriage was suitable.

I accepted these arguments. My interest in the success of my brother and the knowledge that my stepfather had had no share in the crimes which had led my father to the scaffold caused me to consider the marriage more favorably, until the moment of my mother's departure for Italy renewed my grief.

My first cousin Emilie de Beauharnaïs,[5] whom mother had taken care of after my uncle François's departure from France, was sent to school with me, and Jerome Bonaparte, the General's young brother, was sent to the same school as Eugène. Having done this mother left to rejoin her husband.

A short time passed, and the newspapers were filled with accounts of my stepfather's victories. Every day Madame Campan would try to read me the descriptions of them, but I refused to listen and left the room. Then she would send for me and oblige me to listen, saying as

she did so, "Do you realize your mother has chosen an extraordinary man as her husband? What gifts he possesses! How remarkable he is!"

"Madame," I replied one day, very seriously, "I will give him credit for all his other conquests, but I will never forgive him for having conquered mother." The expression amused Madame Campan. She repeated it. It spread all over town. The reactionaries living around the Faubourg Saint-Germain became enthusiastic over my attitude, attributing to me political opinions I never dreamed of having.

For some time Madame Campan had been urging me to write to my stepfather. I had always refused. How could I be expected to express sentiments I did not feel? It was out of the question. Yet on the other hand I could not dwell on my disappointment that the marriage had taken place. I thought it best not to write at all, but as Madame Campan insisted I finally yielded. My letter centered around one idea and might be summed up as follows: "I have been told of your marriage with my mother. What surprises me is that you, whom I have so often heard speak badly of women, should have made up your mind to marry one of these creatures." The General's reply was very long and written in an extremely difficult hand, practically indecipherable unless one were used to it. It was not till years later, during the Consulate, that Bourrienne, the First Consul's private secretary, revealed to me all the kind phrases it contained.[6]

It was about this time that I was confirmed. I took communion with all the fervor of a person whose soul is as ardent as it is innocent. My brother was confirmed the same day. Every Sunday he spent two hours with me in Madame Campan's private apartment. But I did not enjoy this pleasure very long as General Bonaparte sent for Eugène to go to Italy to act as his aide-de-camp. How cruelly I suffered at being deprived of the companionship of the brother I loved so dearly!

The only consolation left me was the affection of my

fellow pupils, the tender care of Madame Campan. The latter worried about the intensity of my emotions. She sought to remedy what she called my excessive sensitiveness by developing my mind, by teaching me from the outset to beware of that impulsiveness which later in life might prove prejudicial to me. Fortunately I took my pleasures as seriously as I did my sorrows. As a rule I was very light-hearted, even hoidenish. This tendency to a great extent remedied my too keen "sensibility." I sought always to taste to the full every emotion, nothing was indifferent to me, everything affected me profoundly.

At vacation time the mothers came to take away their daughters. I remained behind. Apparently I had no family of my own. I felt very sorry for myself. This was unjust, for no general, no aide-de-camp arrived in Paris from Italy bearing despatches or captured flags who did not also bring me messages and souvenirs from my mother. My stepfather also sent me watches [7] and Venetian chains by his aides-de-camp Marmont and Lavallette. Everything was done to show me I was not forgotten, that I was not really abandoned.

My grandfather was living at Fontainebleau. The Princess de Hohenzollern had left France a short time after the death of her brother the Prince de Salm. There was no one I could go out with. To be sure Madame Tallien asked me to spend a few days with her, but I invariably declined. I did not feel that her circle formed proper surroundings for me. My close friendship with Madame Campan's nieces helped me to bear the separation from my family, and occasionally I went to Grignon, their father's handsome estate.

One day, Madame Campan took us on an outing to visit one of her aunts who lived at Versailles. In the evening tea was served and other guests came in. Among them was a poet who became much interested in our party and particularly in me. I did not care especially for his attentions at the time, but was overcome with surprise and even grief (I remember I cried like a child)

when the next day I found in a newspaper some verses he had written for me. Madame Campan laughed at the sight of my despair.

"Just think, madame," I said sobbing, "he's only a flatterer trying to obtain my stepfather's favor. In doing so he is hurting me terribly. In order to be happy a woman must not attract attention, and here's my name in print in a newspaper. People will notice it, will talk about me, and I shall certainly be unhappy." I began to weep again, perhaps with a foreboding of the future.

Madame Campan realized I was too deeply upset for her to joke about the matter. She said to me tenderly, "Yes, people will talk about you. That is probably a part of your fate. Remember you must never do harm, for every act you perform will be known. The higher a person's rank, the more severely he is criticized. Accept what destiny holds in store for you. Doubtless it will be happiness, for you will be good and have reason to be satisfied with your conduct."

To return to my poet. My dislike for him was so intense that, fifteen years later, when he sent me one of his volumes with an extremely polite letter, the moment I recognized his name I threw away the book and the letter, exclaiming as I did so, "Ah, that horrid man. He brought me bad luck."

Madame de Campan tried to instil in the hearts of her pupils a feeling which very few women are conscious of, namely, a love for one's country. How many famous Frenchmen have been lacking in patriotism! Otherwise they would have spared France many of those misfortunes which resulted from their acts and which darken their fame. One should love one's country, and must be constantly ready to sacrifice oneself for it. This is what I sought to teach my children. Perhaps I succeeded only too well if fate keeps them forever from France, which I tried to make dear to their hearts.

Madame Campan also took great pains to form her pupils' character. She founded a good-conduct prize, consisting of an artificial rose, to be worn on Sundays by the girl who received the most votes. Everyone, pupils, teachers, servants, cast a ballot. No one wished to compete against me for this prize and it was known in advance that I was to receive it. It was awarded me as expected. This incident, the tears of joy it provoked, the enthusiasm it aroused produced on me one of the deepest and most agreeable sensations I ever experienced.

Three months later another election was held. The discussions that went on about it set the boarding-school humming. Among the four candidates for the rose was a young lady possessing many natural gifts, but inclined to be headstrong and wilful; the hope of winning the prize had in a few weeks made her the most agreeable and obliging of us all. Her rival, my cousin Emilie de Beauharnais, had to make no effort whatsoever in order to please. Her kind disposition endeared her to everyone; but the question arose as to which was the more deserving of the two, she who can overcome her faults or she who simply follows the dictates of her nature. The question was debated with all that earnestness and passion which youth can command, and the day of the election might have proved a day of conflict had not Madame Campan, in order to satisfy both parties, divided the spray into two parts and named two prize winners instead of one. On this important issue I remained neutral. It would have been too natural for me to vote for my cousin.

While my school-days passed thus quietly and calmly, the only incidents being such as I have just related, important events were taking place in the outside world. The peace of Campo-Formio had just been signed.

Family affairs obliged my grandfather and his wife to stay in Paris. He wished to see me again. It had been a long while since I had been away from Saint-Germain.

As I drove at nightfall across that square, where so many people had perished, the memory of my father, the thought of his tragic death rose before me. I wept silently, sitting in the back of the coach. I should have been ashamed to have others notice my emotion. Always I have attempted to keep my feelings to myself. I believe the deeper they are the more one restrains them.

I had only been staying for a few days with my grandfather, when General Bonaparte arrived from Italy.[8] Paris rang with his name. Everyone sought to catch a glimpse of him in order to admire him. He lived at my mother's house in the rue Chantereine, which was promptly rechristened rue de la Victoire. One morning my grandfather took us, my cousin and myself, to see him. What a change had come over our little home that formerly was so quiet. Now it was filled with generals and officers. The sentinels had difficulty in keeping back a crowd made up of all classes of people, impatient and eager to catch sight of the conqueror of Italy. Finally, in spite of the throng we managed to reach the General. He was having breakfast surrounded by a numerous staff. He greeted us as affectionately as a father might have done, gave me news of my brother whom he had sent to Zante, to Corfu, to Cephalonia and to Rome with the news of the signing of the peace-treaty, and told me that mother would be home soon. A few days later I did, as a matter of fact, have the pleasure of seeing her again and of going to live with her.

She enjoyed telling me about her travels: how the troops of General Wurmser had fired on her carriage near Mantua; how General Bonaparte when he heard of this had declared, "Wurmser will pay dearly for having frightened you"; and how shortly afterwards new victories had confirmed his threats.

I remember also that in telling me about the honors she had received in Italy she spoke of a prophecy an old negress in Martinique had made before she was married

about her future. After announcing she would marry twice a long way from home and would have two children by her first husband, the fortune-teller had added, "Your second marriage will make you more than a queen. But beware of a priest [9] who wishes you ill." My mother pointed out that the first part of the prophecy, which she had forgotten until now, had come true, as the successes of the French armies in Italy had made her more than a queen. She never guessed these successes would carry her still higher. Nevertheless the latter part of the prediction frightened her in spite of herself, and she admitted she was always nervous when she saw a priest too intimate with her husband.

Monsieur de Talleyrand, at that time Minister of Foreign Affairs, gave a great reception [10] in honor of General Bonaparte. My mother took me with her to the party, and it was there I first saw Madame de Staël. She kept following the General about all the time, boring him to a point where he could not, and perhaps did not, sufficiently attempt to hide his annoyance.[11] It was at this ball that when she asked him, "Whom do you consider the greatest woman in the world, past or present?" Bonaparte answered with a smile, "The one who has had the most children."

Mother was naturally obliged to go out a great deal. I preferred not to accompany her and spent my evenings at my grandfather's house where I should be sure of seeing my cousin and the Mesdemoiselles Auguié. Louis Bonaparte, who returned to Paris ahead of the General, also enjoyed our company. He came to see us often and seemed particularly interested in me. For some inexplicable reason I was afraid of him and took pleasure in convincing my cousin that it was on her account he called so often.

Joseph Bonaparte now arrived in Paris with Julie, his wife, his sister Caroline Bonaparte,[12] and his wife's sister Désirée Clary. My brother, whose special mission was

completed, accompanied them. He had been a mere lad when he left and he came back a man. I looked up to him as my natural protector.

I had expected to find a real friend in Caroline Bonaparte. She was about my age, and I had no doubt that our characters would be congenial. It was the General's fault if this did not take place. He too frequently held me up to his sister as a model and was too anxious to impress her with such natural gifts as I happened to possess. But what especially upset her was the idea of becoming a pupil at Madame Campan's boarding-school. In vain I pointed out that no existence could be more agreeable than the busy days we spent at Saint-Germain, that the pleasures we found there were quite as great as anything Paris had to offer. I was not able to prove my case. Caroline was already used to society and enjoyed it. Yet in spite of her tears she had to obey the General. I took a great deal of trouble to make her first moments at school as pleasant as possible. I blamed the fact of her being backward in her studies on her having traveled a great deal. I made much of what knowledge she possessed and retouched her drawings so that she might win a prize. But I failed in my efforts to make her like me. Indeed she went so far as to bring unjust accusations against me. She told the General I was always showing off at her expense, that it was I who was responsible for the petty humiliations her fellow pupils inflicted on her. Wounded by these undeserved attacks, I demanded that she explain her attitude. She did so with a frankness that disarmed me. She admitted her injustice, confessed she was in love with Colonel Murat, and vowed she was prepared to employ every means in her power to be taken out of school and brought back to Paris. Touched by her confession I forgave her, and from that moment on we became friends.

The expedition to Egypt was in course of preparation but General Bonaparte before his departure wished to

arrange the marriage of my cousin Emilie de Beauharnais. The latter was as beautiful and sweet as an angel. A thousand personal charms in addition to her position made her a most desirable match. The General offered her hand to General Marmont, who only declined because she was the daughter of an émigré. Monsieur Lavallette was eligible on account of his ability and his highly honorable character. He was distinguished in mind and manner if not in looks. General Bonaparte suggested this marriage to him and he accepted. One day he appeared at Saint-Germain as escort to the General and my mother. We were at luncheon. As it happened one of the girls was in disgrace, a thing that very rarely occurred. Her punishment consisted in being obliged to sit at a separate table without a table-cloth. Imagine what a terrible mortification it was for the poor girl to be found thus by the conqueror of Italy. The General put an end to the ordeal in a few minutes by asking for and obtaining the culprit's pardon. The victim of this tragic occurrence was Mademoiselle Zoé Talon, later Madame du Cayla (mistress of Louis XVIII).

The General inspected the whole school. He asked about the various courses of study, gave his opinion as to what subjects were the most important for women, in short devoted the same serious care and attention to these matters which concerned only a few little girls as I have since seen him give to problems of great importance.

Madame Campan was impressed by the aptness of his remarks. Caroline, my cousin and I accompanied the visitors for a drive in the forest of Saint-Germain. They had brought a cold meal with them in their carriage, and we dined on the grass. Monsieur Lavallette was very attentive to my cousin, and the marriage took place a week before the departure of the expedition to Egypt. It was celebrated very simply at my grandfather's house. Caroline and I were present.

After the ceremony it seemed to me that my cousin

looked sad. The idea occurred to me that perhaps the match was not to her liking. I spoke to her with tender solicitude, and she finally admitted that she was in love with Louis Bonaparte.[13] I was both surprised and grieved at this tardy confession and at my helplessness to modify a step which had been definitely taken. I was convinced that had she spoken earlier, I, acting through mother, could have broken off the engagement. Her grief touched me all the more keenly since marriage to a man you did not love seemed to me the most terrible fate imaginable.

My mother accompanied her husband and my brother as far as Toulon whence they were to sail for Egypt. From Toulon she went to Plombières while waiting for the time when she could follow them. A fall came near costing her her life. She was standing with some other persons on a balcony when the planks gave way and she fell twenty feet to the pavement. Thinking she was about to die she sent for me at Saint-Germain. I arrived at once, and my tender care restored her to health.

Toward the close of our stay at Plombières people spoke enthusiastically of the approaching arrival of Director Reubell and his two sons. Someone praised them in my presence and did so rather pointedly, watching my expression meanwhile. I felt very self-conscious. Too young to marry I was annoyed at the very idea that a man who might not be to my liking could consider the possibility of becoming my husband.[14] "They hold the highest rank in France," I said to myself, "consequently there is no social difference between us, but I could never consider such a match. My dream is to enter an old, well-established family where I will find solid happiness rather than glittering display. All this pretentiousness has something cheap about it that displeases me." Yet I could not help thinking about these young men of whom I had heard so many agreeable things. The few novels I had been allowed to read had taught me love may come sud-

JOSEPHINE
Marble Bust by Bosio from
the Collection of Prince Napoleon

denly. Without having pictured it in my mind I feared its approach. I had promised myself I would not give my heart to anyone except the man I was destined to marry. I fought in advance against the emotion I thought I might feel stir in me. I tried in all sorts of ways to avoid the threatened danger. Finally I decided that when the Reubells were introduced I would only notice their faults.

In due time they called on my mother. I cannot describe the turmoil of my emotions, but it did not last. A girl's imagination pictures perfection. The image she forms in her mind surpasses reality to such an extent that when she meets a man who is merely average he seems hopelessly commonplace.

Consequently I found nothing especially interesting about these gentlemen. I laughed at my terrors, and they benefited by the indifference they aroused.

All of General Bonaparte's family were now in Paris. Lucien, a member of the Council of the Five Hundred, had quarreled with all his relatives on account of his unsuitable marriage. [He married Catherine Boyer, daughter of an innkeeper at Saint-Maximien, May 4, 1794. None of his family attended the wedding.] My mother succeeded in reconciling him with General Bonaparte, and his wife was so nice that everyone ended by receiving her and liking her.

General Bernadotte married Désirée Clary, the sister of Madame Joseph Bonaparte. All these persons kept by themselves, living very quietly and seeing my mother only occasionally. About this time she purchased the estate known as Malmaison, which she improved and where she stayed while waiting for the General's return.[15] I spent one day each week with her, and she complained to me about the attitude of the Bonaparte family. Louis, for instance, when he came back from Egypt had been in no hurry to go and see her, and this upset her.

I experienced a serious shock about this time when I

received word that my brother had been wounded during the attack on Saint-Jean-d'Acre. A shell had exploded in the midst of the General's staff, a fragment striking Eugène in the head and rendering him unconscious. It was thought at first he had been killed. The same day Colonel Duroc was seriously wounded, and General Bonaparte himself was in great danger. He had been saved by a sergeant (later General Daumesnil) in the quartermaster corps of a regiment of the Guides. This man threw himself between a shell and the General, seized the latter and covered him with his own body. The General, overcome at the sight of my brother's wound, had not been aware of the risk he was exposing himself to.

At last General Bonaparte disembarked at Fréjus at the moment when he was least expected [October 9, 1799]. So great was the enthusiasm that the entire population hastened toward the vessel which brought him to port, climbed aboard and broke all the rules of quarantine.

France at that moment was so wretched that all arms stretched out to the General appealing for aid. All put their hopes in him. I left Paris with my mother to meet the returning soldier. We went through Burgundy. In every city, every village, triumphal arches had been erected. When we stopped to change horses the people would gather around our coach to ask whether it was really true that their *savior,* for that was the name by which all France called the General, had returned. With Italy lost, the finances exhausted, the Directorate helpless and regarded with contempt, this arrival of the General was considered a Heaven-sent miracle. His progress was marked by continuous ovations. It showed him, and at the same time proved to his enemies, what great things France expected of him. Hardly had the General reached Paris when all political parties sought him out. All were eager to change the form of government and wished to have his precious help in doing so.

It was at Chalon-sur-Saône that mother and I heard

he had traveled up by another route, through the Bourbonnais. He was already in Paris when we arrived there.[16]

Following the General's return Caroline and I stayed in Paris till the 16th Brumaire. On that date he suddenly sent us back to Saint Germain. My mother begged that we stay a few more days with her, but he refused. Little did we guess what was to happen on the morrow. But on the night of the 19th Brumaire General Murat, in true soldier-lover fashion, sent us four grenadiers of the Guard, of which he was the commander, to tell us the news. It was from them we learned what had taken place at Saint Cloud, and that General Bonaparte had been nominated Consul.

Imagine the effect of four grenadiers knocking on the doors of a convent in the middle of the night. Everyone was terrified. Madame Campan disapproved of such a cavalier method of conduct, but Caroline considered it a sign of affection.

CHAPTER III

AT THE PALACE OF THE TUILERIES AND THE CHATEÂU OF THE MALMAISON (1799-1801)

Wedding of Caroline Bonaparte—Thoughts on Love and Marriage—Hortense's Suitors—"The Plague Victims at Jaffa"—Home-Life of the First Consul—Plots and Plotters—The Explosion in the Rue Saint-Nicaise—At Malmaison—Various Visitors—Mademoiselle Clairon—More Sentimental Complications—Duroc's Letter and Bourrienne's Tears—A Fire in the Tuileries—The King and Queen of Etruria at Malmaison—The Peace of Amiens.

FOLLOWING the revolution that took place on the 18th Brumaire, the Consul moved into the Palace of the Luxembourg and devoted himself entirely to affairs of state. My mother's first concern was to secure permission from him for the return of a number of political exiles. Naturally her drawing-room was crowded daily with members of the oldest families of France, some of whose relatives had sought shelter abroad. Later they would return accompanied by a father, a husband or a brother eager to express his gratitude toward the person who had enabled him once more to look upon his native land. My mother, who had had me recalled from school and kept me with her, was constantly introducing me to relatives whom I had never heard of before. The number of the latter speedily became so great that it was easy to surmise we owed this increase in our family to our new rank.

My mother took me to a ball at the house of Monsieur de Périgord, the brother of Monsieur de Talleyrand. The host's name had until quite recently figured on the list of refugees. The guests at his ball consisted entirely of those who had shared his misfortunes and a part of the nobility who had survived the horrors of the Revolu-

tion. It was there that I for the first time saw Monsieur de Mun, Monsieur de Gontaut, Monsieur de Nicolaï, Monsieur de Noailles, and Monsieur de Choiseul-Praslin, who one after the other became my suitors. I admit their manners pleased me although I was most critical in that respect, but I wished to have an opportunity to become acquainted with their real characters and above all to make sure they were marrying me for myself alone. As a matter of fact I was too young to consider matrimony and would have been glad to return to Saint-Germain.

The idle life I led at the Luxembourg bored me and became quite unbearable when my mother began to talk seriously to me about Monsieur de Mun. He was enormously wealthy, already the master of his fortune and, according to reports, deeply in love with me. I was willing enough to admit all his advantages. What I declined to believe was his affection. I thought, "He has had no opportunity to know me and he says he loves me. Either he is of a shallow nature, or it is the daughter of the First Consul he wishes to marry out of ambition or vanity." This idea caused me to avoid him with the utmost care. He never had a chance to speak to me, and at last, after I had begged for it repeatedly, I was allowed to return to Saint-Germain.

My mother sometimes spoke to the First Consul about my marriage. He had little to say on the subject. At that time he sought to marry his brothers and sisters either to the most distinguished families belonging to the old nobility, in order to attach the latter to the new régime, or else to generals whose abilities and skill had secured France her latest glories. He replied to my mother that my extreme youth allowed me to take my time, and that undoubtedly in due course a suitably brilliant match could be arranged. His two eldest sisters had disappointed his matrimonial projects. Elisa had chosen, instead of General Berthier, a young Corsican named

Bacciochi.[1] Although of good family, honest and kind, he did not come up to the Consul's wishes. His second sister Pauline had selected General Leclerc,[2] and Caroline, the third sister, announced openly her affection for General Murat.

None of these alliances pleased the Consul. It was a long while before he gave his consent to that of Caroline and Murat. He signed the contract[3] with reluctance and would not attend the ceremony. The annoyance it caused him led to his saying one day to Madame Campan, "I hope at least this one" (pointing to me) "will let herself be married properly." At one time he had thought of marrying his sister to General Duroc, whom he esteemed highly. Neither she nor the General paid any attention to his wishes.

Caroline's wedding took place at Mortefontaine.[4] I was present. It afforded me food for thought. Here were two people who seemed to have achieved complete felicity, since the love of her husband is the only perfect happiness within a woman's grasp. Yet can such happiness be complete when our parents disapprove of the choice we have made? Could I experience a happiness my mother did not share? On the other hand to be led to the altar blindly, to approach it in a spirit of obedience, to surrender oneself without love, this was a sacrifice more cruel than anything I was prepared to endure. Therefore I hoped to be able to satisfy both the dictates of my heart and the wishes of my family. To achieve this I resolved to examine attentively, but in such a way as not to attract attention, all those men who sought to please me and who succeeded so poorly in their attempts.

It was to be sure rather presumptuous on the part of a young lady of sixteen to imagine she could grasp almost at a glance secrets which often escape mature and long-continued scrutiny. I fancied that a single word or gesture frequently revealed a person's nature. All I had to do would be to seize that word and note that gesture.

My efforts were vain. Nothing that I saw or heard touched my heart. Doubtless I demanded too much. I sought the sublime, the unattainable, but the very loftiness of my ambitions, since it made their realization impossible, assured my peace of mind.

Paris was coming to life again. Balls, receptions and general rejoicings followed the end of the Reign of Terror. Yet the social tone of the old régime had disappeared. France's wealth had changed hands. Now it was to be found in the pockets of tradespeople, and it was they who entertained, who showed visitors the sights of the city, who squandered in a single night's entertainment a fortune they had acquired too easily. Foreigners flocked to Paris. They were curious to see what France was like after such political upheavals and had confidence in the new order. The only drawing-rooms these visitors entered were those of these *nouveaux riches*.

There they obtained their ideas regarding French society and on returning home filled their news-sheets with erroneous opinions.

All this time France was prosperous. The government was being organized. Public works were undertaken on a vast scale. The luxury which is a necessary part of the life of every great nation reappeared. The First Consul in order to revive the factories of Lyons, and to free us from paying tribute to England, forbade the wearing of muslin materials and ordered the destruction of all English-manufactured goods. When my mother or I would come into the room wearing an elegant dress his first question was, "Is that gown made of muslin?" Frequently we would say that it was linen from Saint-Quentin, but if a smile betrayed the fact that we were not telling the truth, he would tear off the guilty garment. This unpleasant incident having been repeated on several occasions we were obliged to revert to satin or velvet. The decrees of fashion carried out what those of the Consul might not have otherwise achieved, but cashmere shawls,

in spite of being frequently threatened with destruction, continued to be worn.

The Consul was so uncomfortably housed in the Palace of the Luxembourg that he moved to that of the Tuileries.[5] Perhaps too he was anxious to live in the house of the former rulers of France. I can recall my mother's melancholy the first few days of our residence at the Tuileries. She kept imagining she saw poor Queen Marie Antoinette. I had the same impression on account of the vivid reminiscences of Madame Campan. My mother made a remark which saddened me. "I shall never be happy here," she said to me. "I felt gloomy forebodings from the first minute I entered."[6] I attempted to cheer her but did not succeed. Social activities and especially the good she was able to do others triumphed where my efforts failed.

No matter how much I might dislike what are known as "suitable" marriages everyone seemed to be proposing matches of that description. All the old dowagers of the Faubourg Saint-Germain devoted themselves to the task with indefatigable zeal. Among others Madame de Montesson, who had taken a great fancy to me, suggested one day I should marry the Duc d'Arenberg.[7] Another time it was the leader of the Chouans [the royalist rebels] who wished to make his peace with the government and my hand was to serve as security. Several young nobles who had lost their estates through expropriation by the government hoped to get them back if they married me, while at the same time several generals also appeared as candidates. Macdonald [later the hero of the Battle of Wagram] was among the latter. To him the First Consul replied that he intended I should marry some young man whom I could love, not a person almost old enough to be my father. This reply relieved my mind since it showed he cared about my happiness. It wiped out the unpleasant impression caused by a talk I had had a few days before with my brother. When I pictured what I con-

sidered would be a happy future he had said to me, "Hortense, my dear, do not cherish false illusions. The more we rise in rank, the less we become free agents. I think you will have to marry in accordance with the wishes of the Consul, perhaps to suit his political plans. Forget your dreams of an impossible bliss."

My mother, who treated me more as a friend than a daughter, kept me informed of the various proposals. As a matter of fact it was easy to guess what was going on. Mornings I liked to spend in my own apartment. Every few minutes mother would send for me. I would have to bring out my drawings and have them admired. Among the visitors there would be a young man who would look at me particularly intently. It was easy to guess what that meant, and every day I became more and more annoyed about it.

Once an elderly lady called at the Tuileries. Mother was out. The visitor asked to see me and talked to me at great length about Monsieur de Mun, praising him to the skies. The more I kept insisting I would never marry him, that I could never care for him, the more persistently she sought to persuade me to change my mind, or at least think the matter over. Remembering her influence on my mother I foresaw more worries in the future and unable to bear the prospect gave way to tears.

"So you have absolutely made up your mind not to marry Monsieur de Mun?" she repeated.

"Oh, absolutely!" I replied.

"Well, I am delighted to hear it," she went on. "I called on your mother especially to suggest another husband for you, one who I am sure would please you very much better." This remark made me burst out laughing as much at this novel manner of proposing a fiancé as at the tears I had just been shedding so needlessly.

Constantly I was called upon to repulse new attacks. My hand seemed to be everybody's property. People seemed to think they could do what they pleased with it,

and to mask the real reasons for this assiduity paid me all sorts of fantastic compliments. I had not attempted to hide my grief at the time of my mother's marriage; therefore people supposed that my sympathies were with the old régime. It was said the First Consul called me his little rebel, that one day I had dared tell him the uniform of commander of the royal forces would be more becoming to him than his badge of office. In short people took for granted I shared their views and opinions. Consequently at that time I had the rare good fortune of pleasing everyone. My mother enjoyed the sight of my social success, but I was mortified at being so much under observation from all sides. I complained of it to her and begged to be allowed to go back and spend one more year at Saint-Germain. Finally she agreed.

The public was touched that I should prefer life in a boarding-school where I was merely one of the pupils to that of a palace, considering the latter a center of gaiety and pleasure. As a matter of fact my real joys were to be found at Saint-Germain. There I was liked for myself only. Affection inspired whatever praise I received, praise which was dearer to me than any offered me in Paris since the latter was so obviously prompted by self-interest. In spite of this my mother was dissatisfied with my absence. Before six days had elapsed she sent for me. My departure had made her weep, and she chid me gently with being happy away from her and preferring the companionship of my friends to what she had to offer. The Consul, who came in while this scene was taking place, laughed at her reproaches and in fun tried to arouse her still more, saying, "Do you think you had children to please yourself? What a mistake! The moment boys and girls have grown up they no longer need their parents. When Hortense is married she will care only for her husband and pay no attention at all to you." I protested but he continued, "Children always love their parents less than their parents love them. That is a law

of nature. Look at young birds. As soon as they can fly they leave the nest and never return."

Tears fell from my mother's eyes. Seeing this he took her on his knees, kissed her, and in a tone that was half jesting, half serious said, "Poor little woman, who is so unhappy. She has a husband who cares only for her, and that isn't enough. It is I who ought to make a scene, for you are far fonder of your children than you are of me."

"No," replied my mother, with a smile, "you cannot doubt my affection, but I cannot be wholly happy if my children are not with me."

"What more do you need to make you happy?" asked the Consul. "You have a husband who is no worse than the average, two children who are in every way a credit to you. Surely you were born with a silver spoon in your mouth."

"You're right," she replied, and joy followed the tears.

Several such discussions having taken place, I realized that it was necessary to wait for my mother herself to suggest that I return to Saint-Germain. Several days passed, she said nothing, and I remained finally with her.

My apartment, which was very small, was next to my mother's dressing-room.[8] In order not to waste my time I had selected several teachers. The First Consul said to me severely, "Are you studying English?"

"Yes," I answered, somewhat dismayed by the tone in which he spoke.

"Dismiss your teacher."

"But he seems very good."

"I tell you to dismiss him. He is a spy."

"That can't be true."

"Do as I say. You are nothing but a child and do not understand these things."

I was silent, convinced this was a piece of slander and that so despicable a trade could not be carried on by such an honest-looking man. Moreover, what could he

hope to find out from me? The incident annoyed me, for I believed I was committing an injustice. I declined to take another teacher for fear of offending the one I had dismissed, and I gave up studying English.

My brother left for the front with his regiment.[9] The Consul followed him shortly afterwards, executing that wonderful crossing of the Alps and winning the Battle of Marengo, thus further increasing the passionate admiration which he already aroused in France. My readers can imagine for themselves the anxiety through which we passed and the joy we felt when the Consul wrote, saying my brother had distinguished himself. While they were away we lived at La Malmaison and all the young men of the Faubourg Saint-Germain called there assiduously. My marriage began to be spoken of again.

There could no longer be any question of Monsieur de Mun, as my mother realized, but Monsieur de Gontaut, an agreeable-looking youth, younger brother of the Duc de Biron, was ready to take his place as candidate. He was only nineteen and I did not dislike him. Yet when I watched his boyish pranks, his silly antics and remembered that a husband should be his wife's counselor and support I could not help wondering if such light-heartedness was compatible with the serious business of life. Finally one day I discovered him rolling on the floor while he played with my mother's little dog. That settled the question.

The return of the First Consul interrupted these various matrimonial projects. He came back much depressed by the death of General Desaix. One evening as he was speaking to my mother about the General tears stood in his eyes. "What a fine man! What a loss to our country! I intended him for Hortense. With him she would have been happy. I regret him deeply." My mother noted with pleasure these moments when this brilliant man, too frequently accused of lacking emotion, gave way to his feelings.

"People do not know Napoleon," she would say. "He is quick-tempered, but kind. If he did not seek to suppress these outbursts of feeling, which he considers signs of weakness, people would understand him better."

One day as we were standing at a window of the Tuileries the Consul noticed a man, decently dressed, who in a deprecating manner was asking the passers-by for alms. He sent Eugène out to him with some money. We watched with interest to see the effect this gift would have on the old man. His joy was so great that the Consul exclaimed, "How little it takes to satisfy him. Let us make him entirely happy." Immediately the old man was brought in, the First Consul questioned him regarding his needs and how he had fallen into poverty, paid him a considerable sum of money and promised him his protection.

About this time I had a bad cold. To keep warm I had made myself a turban out of muslin. The Consul said to me:

"Did we bring the fashion of wearing turbans back from Egypt with us? If so I can give you some strips of cashmere so that you can make yourself a real one." He called his servant and asked, "Have I still the red, white and blue waistband that was made for me in Egypt?"

"Yes, General," answered Ambart.

"Then go and get it. I wore it at the Battle of the Pyramids," he went on turning to my mother, "so it has been somewhat blackened by the smoke, and it had a close view of the plague. Take it, Hortense," he added, when it had been brought to him. "Don't be frightened of it, and may it prove becoming."

As I had often heard my stepfather and his companions speak of his visit to the plague-victims at Jaffa it occurred to me that the incident might make an effective painting. Gros, who had just come back from Italy, happened to be at the Tuileries one morning. I mentioned my idea to him. He approved of it and made a picture that has re-

mained one of his finest works. It was shown at the Salon.[10]

One morning my brother came in very cross with the painter for having drawn the General's aides-de-camp holding their handkerchiefs in front of their mouths.

"I know better than anyone else what took place at Jaffa," he said, "because I was there with the other aides-de-camp. We certainly did not feel comfortable. But would we have dared show our nervousness on an occasion when the General, in order to reassure the troops, displayed such courage and exposed himself as he did?"

I had considerable difficulty in proving to my brother that since painting was only an approximation of reality, a picture could only express an idea from a certain angle. In this case in order to indicate the courage of the principal figure the painter had been obliged to suggest a different feeling on the part of the others and sacrifice them in this respect. All the other aides-de-camp shared my brother's just indignation, and I had trouble pacifying them, and making them accept the idea of artistic convention.

The First Consul was entirely absorbed by his work. He rested neither day nor night, and everything else was subordinated to it. Bed-time and meal-time were equally irregular, and he seemed able to do without sleep or food. He always lunched alone. We saw him only at dinner. If he happened to come downstairs earlier and my mother was still dressing he enjoyed teasing her or criticizing the way she did her hair. He would take off the flowers she was wearing, put them back differently, insist that this new way was much more becoming than the way the hairdresser had arranged them, and call on me to testify what good taste he had. All this with a most comically serious manner.

Days when he had something on his mind he would come in looking serious, sit down in a big armchair in front of the fireplace or walk about the room without pay-

ing attention to anyone. "Not ready yet?" would be his only remark. Dinner took place in silence. It lasted ten minutes. Sometimes he even left the table before the dessert had been served. My mother would point this out to him. He would smile, sit down a moment and then leave us immediately without having said a word. When he was in a humor like this everyone was afraid of him. No one ventured to interrupt his thoughts for fear of disturbing him and receiving a harsh rebuff. We would say to each other, "He is in a bad temper today. Has anything new happened?" After having tried to find out what the trouble might be we would not know after all.

We went to the theater fairly often. The plays the Consul liked best were tragedies by Corneille and Racine. He only went to the Opera because we enjoyed it. The day of the first performance of "Dansomanie" [11] my brother, who had told us he would not be dining at the Tuileries, appeared about six o'clock accompanied by all the other aides-de-camp. I was surprised and told him so. He informed me that there was a plot to assassinate the First Consul at the play that night and that the latter intended to go in order to seize the conspirators red-handed. All measures had been taken to insure my stepfather's safety, but as a further safeguard his aides-de-camp were going with him. Eugène begged me not to say a word to anyone, especially not to our mother, whose alarm would interfere with the Consul's plans. Imagine my terror up to the moment when, entering the Opera, I saw everything was as quiet as usual. The conspirators had hired the box just over ours. They planned to assassinate the First Consul either when he came in or as he was going out, but they were arrested while the performance was going on. They were tried and convicted. They were Jacobins, called Ceracchi, Arena, etc., and one of their accomplices had betrayed them shortly before the attempt was to be made.

Another plot was made to kill the Consul at the theater

by shooting him with a sort of perfected pea-shooter. I had heard of the plot and during the entire performance, as I sat between my mother and the Consul, I kept casting nervous glances all around the audience. Every time a man took out his handkerchief I wondered if the fatal missile was not about to be aimed at our box. Yet one speedily becomes accustomed to every danger. The failure of several attempts of this kind gave us a feeling of perfect security.

But this did not last. For some time people had been talking about an oratorio by Haydn, the music of which was supposed to be remarkably fine. The day of the performance arrived,[12] and we were preparing to go to the opera-house where it was to be given. The Consul, who had sat down after dinner by the fire, did not seem inclined to go out. We were all dressed and waited impatiently for him to make up his mind. My mother urged him to come.

"It will amuse you; you are working too hard."

The Consul shut his eyes and made no reply. Finally he said we could go, but he was staying in the house. My mother wanted to keep him company, and an argument ensued which ended by orders being given to have the carriages brought to the door. A moment before stepping into his carriage the Consul found fault with my mother's dress,[13] and we owed our life to this remark. She wished to repeat it to Caroline and the aide-de-camp and thus lost a few minutes. Consequently our carriage instead of being as usual immediately behind that of the Consul was some little distance away. As we entered the rue Saint-Nicaise we felt a violent shock. The carriage seemed to be blown away. The glass in the window broke and fell on us.

"It's an attempt to kill Bonaparte," exclaimed my mother, and fainted. Our horses, terrified at the noise, suffocated by the powder, reared and taking the bits in their teeth dashed back with us to the Tuileries.

Caroline, although she was about to have a child,[14] remained cool and attempted to reassure my mother. She had seen a mass of flame. A house had fallen down. It could not be a plot against her brother. But my mother kept repeating over and over, "It's an attempt to kill Bonaparte."

I tried to calm her to the best of my ability. I explained to her that it was our carriage that had been attacked, that the violence of the shock we had experienced proved this and that the mistake had saved the Consul. A piece of glass had slightly wounded my hand. Rapp had dashed into the rue Saint-Nicaise. There he caught sight of men, women and children wounded or dying or with shattered limbs, and ruins that threatened to crash down upon him. But the cries of the victims did not check his course. He sought to rejoin the Consul and yet feared to find him.

One of the soldiers of the escort who had been sent to meet us relieved our apprehension with the news that the explosion had only occurred as the Consul was leaving the rue Saint-Nicaise and that he had arrived safely at the Opera. We proceeded thither by another route. My mother was unable to dissemble her emotion when she caught sight of her husband, but he, calm and untroubled, sought to quiet her fears.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

"What has happened?"

"Nothing very serious." His whole manner was as placid as though he did not know there had been another attempt made on his life. Rapp arrived and described the horrors of the rue Saint-Nicaise, through which he had just passed. The Prefect of Police and General Junot, Military Governor of Paris, presented their reports as they secured further details of this terrible episode. The Consul listened in silence, but when he heard the number of persons whose bodies had been found near the cart loaded with powder (which had served as an

infernal machine) he exclaimed in tones of anguish, "How ghastly to cause the death of so many people [15] in seeking to do away with a single man!"

The news of what had taken place began to spread through the audience. Alarm and curiosity had already caused a number of the spectators to leave the theater, and my mother's agitated appearance indicated clearly that something extraordinary had happened. Finally the performance was over, and we returned to the Tuileries. There we found assembled all the government authorities and leading citizens of Paris. I listened to their discussion. Each suggested which hostile political party he believed capable of committing such an outrage. The Consul and the ministers of state accused the Jacobins. Fouché was alone in his belief that the blow had been struck by the royalists but failed to convince his hearers. Indeed how could one suspect that men who had so loudly protested against the use of violence could be guilty of such an act? Were they trying to resemble those upon whom they had showered scorn and reproaches?

A little later the Consul's coachman (who was drunk that night) came in while we were at dinner and gave the following details: One of his friends had rented a stable to some unknown man. They kept a cart there which they came often to look at. The day the explosion took place they had taken away the cart and never reappeared. While drinking at a public-house he had secured this information, which when added to what the Minister of Police secured furnished the necessary clues. There was no possibility of doubting that it was the royalists who had hatched and executed this plot.

I did not enjoy in the least the life I led at the Tuileries. I should have preferred to live in the country. Malmaison was a charming spot and I was delighted when we went there for a few days, although even then I could not enjoy it in the same way I did when I was alone there. On such occasions I was able to take long

walks through the park, but at other times, when the house was filled with men, these strolls would not have been proper. I was well aware of the fact, and here again the good advice I had received from Madame Campan, which always meant so much to me, taught me what to avoid.

The Consul's habits were much the same at Malmaison as in Paris. He invariably worked all the morning alone with his ministers. Scientists were invited to dinner; they stayed afterwards, spending the rest of the evening, and the Consul enjoyed their conversation. Those I saw the most frequently were Monge, Berthollet, Fourcroy, Volney, Laplace, Lagrange and Prony. Those who were married came with their wives. Lemercier also came to Malmaison several times and read us his tragedies. Of them all the Emperor seemed to prefer Monge best as a man, and he never broke off relations with him entirely. He even suggested later on that I have him as tutor for my children. Volney came to see us only during the Consulate, but then he came often. He was highly esteemed by all the persons who had taken part in the expedition to Egypt. They considered that his account of his travels in that country was the only accurate one and that the descriptions given by another author called Savary were not true.

Volney was a rigid believer in republican ideals. He always came and sat next to me at the table, asked me questions about Saint-Germain, enjoyed hearing me give my views upon life and seemed to approve of them. In those days I did not realize how eminent these distinguished men were. My only recollections of them are very trivial conversations and remarks such as youth could readily understand. For instance the thing I remember about Volney is that whenever he sat beside me he would insist on my not eating too much bread. He said it was not nourishing and made the chyle too thick. I believe it was the word "chyle," which I had never heard pro-

nounced before, that made me remember the distinguished scientist. I learned later that his fidelity to republicanism caused him to see less of us during the Empire.

The Emperor never resented this. He respected all opinions as long as they were honest and sincere, and I recall having seen him very much upset in 1812 or 1813 on hearing of an accident that had happened to Volney. The scientist had been walking along quietly when a bull suddenly charged him and tossed him some distance into a field. I also saw the Emperor distressed by the news that Monsieur de La Fayette (who like Volney avoided us) had broken his leg on the ice as he was coming out from a ball.[16]

The Consul was always anxious to meet and surround himself with eminent men of all kinds. I have never understood why people said he was jealous of others. On the contrary I always felt that he sought to honor in every respect those whose achievements added to the glory of France. The only thing he would not consent to share was his political authority. He considered that this was indispensable to insure the success of his vast plans and the best interests of his country. Therefore he would not share it or allow it to be weakened. Moreover, the enthusiasm of the crowd, the esteem and consideration shown him by everyone he encountered proved his superiority. He seemed born to command other men. I have always seen him the same, as General, Consul and Emperor.

His generals never spoke to him familiarly. Neither Lannes, Berthier, Augereau, nor Lefebvre ever sat down in his presence. He impressed them even more than he did others with a sense of his personal preeminence of which they were all conscious.

A difference in rank has always been considered respectfully in France. I have seen Lannes, Bessières, Murat furiously angry, jealous of each other and talking of leaving the Consul's service because, according to

them, he had treated them unfairly in the way of promotion. Frequently I managed to reconcile them, but whether or not I did so the moment General Bonaparte appeared no one said another word. Sometimes they would have a sullen air if their pride had been too deeply wounded. The General, always aware of what was going on, guessed their thoughts and by an abrupt phrase or a gentle pull of the ear made the insurgent as meek as he had just been the contrary.

Scientists seemed more at their ease with the Consul, for he always allowed them to speak their minds freely. But they remained standing in front of him, following his remarks with avidity and a sort of admiration. I am sure that the authority the Emperor wielded was due to the fact that all those who spoke to him felt he was superior to anyone else in his intelligence and that since it is necessary to have a ruler no one was better qualified than he.

The Consul had so great a respect for all forms of learning that if a distinguished man did not come to see him he would find time, in spite of his many duties, to visit the scholar. One day he went out for a drive with my mother and myself. We went to the Jardin des Plantes to call on Daubenton, the naturalist, who lived in a little pavilion giving on the garden. He seemed very, very old as he sat in a large armchair, but in spite of his advanced years spoke with great animation. The General asked him many questions about Buffon.

I have always been sorry I did not keep a letter the General received from Beaumarchais after his return from Italy. I might have done so easily enough. The letter was so flattering and so well written that he read it aloud to my mother and me. At that time he was receiving so much praise, including expressions of such a fulsome variety, that I could not help noticing what was said with wit and moderation. The compliments Beaumarchais paid him struck me as being in the best of taste, but that letter like so many others was burned.

In the days of the Republic, when polite social life was completely destroyed, the republicans wished to have the upper classes adopt the manners and habits of the mob. Under the Consulate, on the other hand, the Consul in bringing the different strata of society together, sought to introduce into what had formerly been exclusive circles people of worth and distinction without regard for their origin. So deeply are aristocratic traditions rooted in France among all classes that the enterprise was far from easy. Nevertheless he attempted it.

He went so far as to invite to dinner at Malmaison some famous actors. I saw there, one after another, Talma, Mademoiselle Raucourt, Mademoiselle Contat, Mademoiselle Fleury, all distinguished artists and possessing excellent manners. But people took offense, and so strong is the force of prejudice it was quite as much the newly enriched commoners who objected as the old nobility.

On the other hand, one day at the Tuileries the Consul invited to his table two old soldiers, one of whom was over a hundred years of age. I remember it was a dinner attended by the members of the first mission from Russia. One of the young princes attached to the mission, who sat beside me, told me that on their way through Germany everyone tried to frighten them by speaking of their foolhardiness in venturing into France where massacres took place all the time. Although he had not believed these tales, he was surprised to find out on arriving that all one heard talked about here were balls and receptions.

One day an old woman called at Malmaison who seemed to be a hundred years old. She was dressed in the fashion of the days of Louis XVI, with a little black tulle bonnet shaped like a raven's bill, semi-hoopskirts and a brocaded gown set off with pockets. Only the stage had kept such costumes for those who played the parts of old women, and no one would ever have sus-

BONAPARTE
Drawing by Raffet in the
Collection of Prince Napoleon

pected that the person dressed in this fashion was the beautiful and famous actress Mademoiselle Clairon, who had once enchanted all of France. It was she who was the first to discard the habit of wearing dresses that were merely fashionable in favor of those suitable for the different heroines she portrayed.

"I wished to see a hero before I died," she said to my mother, "and I thought, madame, you would not refuse me this pleasure."

Indeed, my mother was very kind to her and invited her to spend part of the day at Malmaison while waiting for the Consul to appear. When he did arrive she looked at him attentively, and if by accident anyone interfered with her view of the First Consul in the drawing-room, she would request the person not to conceal him from her during the few moments she had an opportunity of seeing him.

The Consul was most gracious to her and among other things said, "I have heard so much of your admirable talent I greatly regret never having witnessed one of your performances."

"And I," she replied promptly, "am delighted you never did." Everyone was astonished, and she went on, "Had you done so you would now be an old man, First Consul, and France needs you to remain young." Mademoiselle Clairon died some time after this visit, having received from the Consul the assistance she needed badly.

Sometimes in the evening when the Consul had invited no one to Malmaison he would send for a new book and ask me to read aloud. I was so embarrassed by the idea of doing so in front of him and all his staff that I could not tell one word from another. Then he would say, "Didn't Madame Campan teach you to read?" A remark which redoubled my embarrassment. One day he brought out "Atala," which had just appeared.[17] I remember it as being a very difficult ordeal. The names of trees, places and animals which abounded in this volume were new to

me, and I mispronounced them as though I were doing it on purpose. It was a great trial. If I had only dared I should have pronounced them haphazard and no one would have noticed it, but I stopped each time and seemed to be spelling them out. I was so evidently ill at ease that after a few pages the Consul stopped me and never again tried to make me read romantic literature.

But another difficulty lay before me. One day he asked me to read him a general report from his minister of finance, a report which was to be presented to the legislative bodies. It was so full of piled-up figures that I had as much trouble as with "Atala." I frequently took one column for another and substituted hundreds of millions for hundreds of thousands or billions of francs. The Emperor seemed to have all this clearly in his mind, for he never failed to correct me, rectifying my errors, and he always ended by saying, "Didn't Madame Campan teach you arithmetic?" I must say in defense both of Madame Campan and myself that never did columns of figures seem so appalling.

After dinner the Consul would take my mother's arm and stroll about with her for a long time. I would remain alone surrounded by his entire staff. Although at first I was embarrassed I soon became accustomed to the situation. I felt I must conquer a shyness which might make these young men treat me in a too familiar manner and consequently either ignore me completely, or be too conscious of the embarrassment their presence caused me. I therefore adopted toward them the attitude of a woman in her own home, who sets the tone of the conversation.

I must say that these soldiers, whose life under canvas had kept them away from drawing-rooms, never used a word or an expression that might have shocked me. It is true I chose as topic for our conversation the subject most likely to appeal to them. I questioned them regarding their campaigns in Italy and Egypt. I asked them to

tell me the story of their exploits. I praised them and criticized them and I went as far as to give them advice regarding the things in which they were most interested. I pictured to them what I imagined to be domestic bliss, the only reward they should seek after having won so much glory. I gained their confidence so completely that they consulted me regarding all the offers of marriage they received. One of them wished me to judge the merits of his fiancée. Another declared he would marry only a girl I chose for him, who shared my views on life, and he asked me to find him someone of this description. I enjoyed their esteem, affection and regard. As had been the case at Saint-Germain I felt proud of arousing such sentiments, the more so as they appeared to be based entirely on my personal character. Perhaps this idea made me a little vain, but it strengthened me in my opinions and in the desire to deserve this consideration that was offered me so freely.

The officers whose duties brought them oftenest to Malmaison were the Generals Bessières, Lannes, Clarke, Junot, Murat and the aides-de-camp Le Marois, Caulaincourt, Rapp, Caffarelli, Duroc, Savary, Lauriston, Lacuée, Lebrun, Lefebvre and Bourrienne, the Consul's private secretary. My brother, major in the Chasseurs de la Garde,[18] was a frequent visitor. Louis Bonaparte, who commanded a regiment of dragoons,[19] did not come so often.

Lavallette was special envoy at Dresden. His wife had reluctantly decided to live with him. For an instant she had hoped to have the marriage annulled. On the return of the expedition from Egypt she had explained her feelings to General Bonaparte and at the same time told him she cared for his brother Louis. The latter replied that he thought my cousin a kind, good woman, but even if she were free he would not marry her, because she had changed too much in looks since having had the smallpox. My mother conveyed this message to my cousin, who was

indignant. On the other hand the attentions of her husband, the care he took of her, and his kindness to her gradually won her heart and aroused a warm affection toward the person she had avoided. Since then a lasting union has been the result of this change of heart.

Louis' attitude toward my cousin had prejudiced me against him. The fact of our being in a sense related to one another caused me to look on him as a brother, and when occasion offered I sometimes jested at his expense. It had never entered my mind that he could become my husband, that he could have the least affection for me. But when he came to say good-by before leaving for Prussia he asked permission to kiss me, did so with such evident emotion, and went out of the room so hurriedly that I remained standing motionless. A kind of terror seized me when I conceived the idea he might nourish too warm a sentiment for me.

Of all the young men I came in contact with, only one, Colonel Duroc, dared propose. Recalling the fact that the Consul had planned to marry him to his sister, he thought that my stepfather would not oppose a match between us. I had noticed that he was more embarrassed than the others in speaking to me, that he called more frequently at Malmaison, but he had never said a word as to what was in his mind. Murat wormed the secret out of him and took it into his head to see that this match took place.

"The young lady is romantically inclined," he declared. "One must sigh for some time before hoping to please her. Meanwhile you should declare your sentiments and inform her she is the object of your affections."

As a result of this advice, one day when I returned to the drawing-room to look for a book I had forgotten Duroc came up and timidly returned the volume. On going up to my room I opened the book and found a letter. What should I do? To read it seemed to be committing a sin. I went back downstairs to return it to Duroc, but

he was no longer there. The Consul had sent him away on a mission. It was only at the moment of his departure that he had dared to declare himself. I put the letter in my writing-table, which as usual I did not lock, and left my room.

As chance would have it at dinner time the Consul, who enjoyed teasing me, came into the drawing-room with my mother and finding me there already said to me, "We have just been to your room. We have ransacked all your papers and read all your love-letters. What tender missives you receive!"

I blushed, I stammered, I forgot the joke was not a new one. I felt guilty, and the idea was enough to make me look like a criminal. Uncertain what reply to make I left the room hurriedly and rushed to my writing-desk. The letter was still unopened. I went downstairs again more calmly. But my emotion had not escaped the attention of my mother and the Consul. When I came in they said to me in surprise, "Can it really be true? Have you really secrets? You hurried off very suddenly."

Fortunately the serving of dinner put an end to my predicament. The same evening I told mother everything. Duroc had left a messenger with Murat to bring him word of my answer. I told Caroline that I would never make a decision without knowing my mother's opinion of the matter and I begged her to return the famous letter to the sender. "I do not know," I added, "what fate holds in store for me, but I should not want to be obliged to admit I read a love-letter from anyone else than the man who was to be my husband." I admit that before giving it back I was strongly tempted to try to read it without undoing the envelop, just to see how a man proposed, but I resisted the impulse and feel I had considerable merit in doing so.

Duroc, although not the man my imagination conjured up as the being worthy to receive all my love, was not displeasing to me. I recognized the fact he had numer-

ous qualities. The great respect he had for me caused me to believe in the sincerity of his feelings. Frequently, nevertheless, when I was listening to him I said to myself, "This is not yet the man." Perhaps after all I should have been willing to marry him had it not been for my mother's formal opposition to the match. The Consul saw no objection, but she took the contrary view. Brought up according to the ideas that prevailed among the aristocracy, she considered it a *mésalliance* to marry someone not a member of the nobility. She concealed her prejudices by being equally gracious to all those with whom she came in contact. They did not influence in any way her kindness, which was the same for all, but she considered that nothing was good enough for her daughter. Although Duroc was a gentleman she demanded higher rank either in him or in his family.

"I cannot imagine hearing you spoken of as Madame Duroc," she said to me. "Are you in love with him? I should be so sorry if you were."

I reassured my mother. I told her my heart was untouched, my life was happy, I did not care to consider change of any kind.

I felt sincerely uneasy over what to others might have appeared a mere incident of no importance. The idea that I was hurting someone was unbearable. I took seriously everything that had to do with affairs of the heart. I could not laugh at a thing that sprang from that source.

Bourrienne, the Consul's private secretary, was a man of a certain age. He was very plain, witty but only in a satiric manner, and more to be feared in a drawing-room on account of his malicious way of stating a case than on account of his official position. Of a sudden he began to look glum, speak little, read nothing but Young's "Night Thoughts" and in the evenings go alone into the woods. People would encounter him leaning against a tree and weeping. Even the Consul noticed

his condition. The advice of Doctor Corvisart was asked, but he admitted he was unable to understand it.

General Bessières offered the unkind suggestion that only two things could produce such an effect on Bourrienne, either a financial catastrophe[20] or an unhappy love-affair. This threw a light on the matter. Everyone at Malmaison was convinced Bourrienne was consumed with passion for me. It was considered a case of insanity, but so serious that no one dared make fun of it openly. My mother spoke to me about it. The idea had never entered my head. I watched for signs that would justify these rumors and speedily discovered them. No sooner had I become aware of the harm I had done unconsciously than I resolved to remedy it. How could this be accomplished? Youth is prepared to undertake anything. Its innocence acts as a stimulus; it deserves to achieve its purpose because it makes the attempt so straightforwardly and so bravely. I sought to see more of Bourrienne, to whom before I had scarcely paid any attention. It was difficult to have a conversation with him as he purposely avoided me. Finally the occasion presented itself. I began by inquiring about his health.

"You should take care of yourself," I told him, "for the sake of your wife and children. Have you consulted your doctor?"

"He can do nothing for me."

"Then perhaps your friends can help you. If you are suffering from some illness that is not physical but moral, you should seek help from your wife."

"She does not know what ails me. No one suspects it."

"What, do you mean to say you are suffering from a sorrow that no one shares with you and that you are not strong enough to overcome?"

"That surprises you, does it, mademoiselle? But what would your feelings be if you loved deeply a person your mother forbade you to marry?"

"If the person loved me, even my suffering would be dear to me. Perhaps I should not seek to hide my feelings. But I should be ashamed of a grief that I alone felt, that distressed my friends, that prevented me from carrying out my duties properly. I should summon up my courage and conquer it."

Bourrienne gave me a long look and took my hand. "You have cured me," he said. "I thank you. You have done more for me than you can realize." From that day on he resumed his customary manner, and not a word or a look indicated that I meant anything in his life.

I was delighted with this cure. I was astonished to have inspired a strong affection. Always behaving naturally, without any attempt at coquetry I wished to be liked but made no attempt to please. While my friendly attitude toward everyone about me was doubtless prompted by a desire to be praised, with it was mingled a hope that this praise might come to the ears of the man whom Heaven had chosen for my life's companion.

"He does not know me," I said to myself, "but he will know that others care for me and perhaps that will make him love me the more."

My social life did not cause me to forget my former companions. I often went to see them at Saint-Germain and also visited my grandfather, who had retired to that town. He died there at the age of about eighty-seven, surrounded by our respect and tender affection and bearing with him all our just regrets.

My ability to support all of life's vicissitudes is principally due to the fact that my imagination magnifies coming misfortunes which when they arrive appear less terrifying than the picture I conjure up in advance. Hence I find myself with more than enough courage to face all such perils and afflictions as may befall me. I recall one occasion when a rebuke from the Consul failed to affect me at all. My room in the Tuileries was at the end facing the garden.[21] A little chapel at the corner served me as a

work-room. It was very small, barely large enough to hold two people. At the time, I was copying in oil a portrait of my brother by Gros, and all my papers and drawings were on the floor against the wall. As it was very cold in this room, a pipe for heating the place, which one could open or shut at will, had just been installed. When we left for Malmaison I had forgotten to shut it. The next morning General Clarke came to me in consternation. "Do you know the misfortune that has taken place?" I began to tremble and grew pale as my thoughts flew to my brother, who had just rejoined his regiment.

"Tell me what has happened," I said to the General, scarcely able to breathe.

"All your drawings have been burned," he replied. "All your paintings have been blackened and are ruined. There was a fire last night in your little study."

As he spoke he watched me closely to see what effect his words would have. I felt as though he had told me a piece of good news. My heart resumed its normal beat, and laughing I answered, "How delighted I am and how you frightened me!" At that moment the Consul came into the drawing-room and said with a very stern air, "How did it happen you left papers beside a chimney? A fire broke out last night, and if a sentinel had not noticed it you would be responsible for the destruction of the Tuileries. The entire palace might have been reduced to ashes."

I listened to him with a smile. I could not manage to look distressed. The more he noticed my attitude the more angry he became as he expatiated on the disasters of which I might have been the cause. But I felt so happy at having escaped a danger which involved my affections and which General Clarke's manner had caused me to fear, everything which proved my imagination had been mistaken seemed so agreeable to me, that my step-father's reproofs produced no effect on me.

About this time Louis I of Etruria and his Queen passed

through Paris on the way to Tuscany, whose crown the Consul had just bestowed upon him. It was the first time the Consul had created a kingdom, and Louis was the first Bourbon to appear in France since the Revolution. Orders, necessary in those days, had been given that the King and Queen were to be well and politely treated everywhere. They did not attract any particular attention. Only at Bordeaux did the crowd behave disrespectfully. The sovereigns were attending a performance at the theater, and an actor recited verses written in honor of the Queen by someone who had never seen her. The author praised her beauty, at which the audience laughed so loudly that those who were with the King and Queen were much embarrassed, for although she was young, kind and gentle the Queen was exceedingly homely. I have frequently thought of this incident in order to estimate official compliments at their just value. The King was tall with a good figure. Drooping cheeks and thick lips made his face expressionless. He was subject to epileptic fits. He and his wife often came to Malmaison. The first day the Consul paid no attention to them; he had too much to do elsewhere. My mother was ill, and it was therefore I who was obliged to entertain them. They were not difficult to keep amused. Walks, music, prisoner's base, parlor games—everything delighted them. In fact, when at length the Consul wished to instruct Louis in the arts of statecraft, he found him so absent-minded that he accused me jokingly of having made our guest forget his royal rank. Before our visitors left, the Consul had Berthier and Talleyrand give two receptions for them, which filled them with astonishment, particularly on account of the contrast formed by the brilliance of French society and the dulness of the Spanish court.

One day my mother introduced me to a lady who had come over from England and only once visited Malmaison. It was the Duchesse de Guiche. She did not see the Consul. If, as I have heard since, she had hoped to find

in Napoleon another Monk her trip was not a success. I was too young to gather any exact details regarding the matter so I will not attempt to give any. All I know is that the royalists hoped that France, which was beginning to feel the need of permanent government, would be inclined to forget the past and call the Bourbon family back to power.

The feeling that a government only temporarily in office was not sufficiently stable was shared by men of all classes. The conspirators who had attempted to slay the Consul, with whose life the future of France seemed interwoven, had aroused such hatred that even those in favor of a new republic believed it was necessary to strengthen the powers of the Consul of such a republic, in order to prevent the enemies of the Revolution from being able constantly to endanger the results which it had cost so much to secure. Those in favor of a monarchy demanded also that it be invested with such guarantees as would insure its stability. They considered that the talents of the Consul made him the only one able to achieve this continuity and ward off reactionary movements which were always to be avoided. The higher aristocracy, many of whose members lived abroad, regretted its lost privileges and realized that only by a return of the Bourbons would it be possible to regain them, but it had no hope of this return taking place.

One day the Consul received a very cleverly drafted genealogical chart showing his descent from Louis XIV in the direct line. The person who in order to please all factions had imagined this hoax sought to prove that the Man in the Iron Mask was one of the sons of Louis XIII and Anne of Austria and that Louis XIV was only a second son whose father moreover was the Cardinal Richelieu. The Man in the Iron Mask, according to the genealogist, having been sent to the Island of Saint Margaret, married there the daughter of one of the local nobles. His son had taken the name Bonaparte and had estab-

lished himself in Corsica. Consequently the Consul was the legitimate heir to the French throne. The Consul was much amused at this fairy-tale and laughed about it with us. He was always far prouder of his personal ability than of any illustrious ancestor he might have had or who might be attributed to him. The love of his fellow countrymen was the best of his claims to office.

In our drawing-room there was never a word spoken about political matters. The only one that interested us was the signing of a peace treaty, and we were the last to be informed even about that. When the peace with Vendée was concluded the chiefs of the insurgents who came to Malmaison received a warm welcome from the Consul. He appeared to hold them in high esteem. I frequently have heard him praise them for defending their cause so perseveringly and blame the Bourbons for not having supported such a valiant resistance. Once, after the Empire had been proclaimed, I heard him say, "I do not know what I should have been able to do if the Bourbons had put themselves at the head of the Vendeans."

The Consul's aide-de-camp Colonel Lauriston was sent to England.[22] He was received in triumph, and his carriage was dragged about by the crowd through the streets of London. All of France also felt enthusiastic over the reconciliation of the two great countries which for so long had been enemies. The Consul himself, who so seldom expressed his satisfaction about anything, showed his pleasure on this occasion. He hastened to announce the news to us and immediately ordered the cannon to be fired as sign of rejoicing. It was the only time I ever knew him to inform anyone, especially any woman, regarding a political event.

I do not know whether he had opened the dispatches addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or if he had received the news directly, but Monsieur de Talleyrand appeared at dinner in a very bad humor, quite pu

out, in fact, as someone would be whose vanity had been deprived of an occasion to score a hit. As a matter of fact it was distinctly odd for the Minister of Foreign Affairs to learn that peace had been signed by the firing of the guns at the Hôtel des Invalides. To console him for this little mishap the Consul smilingly paid him special attention.

CHAPTER IV

MADAME LOUIS BONAPARTE (1802-1804)

Bourrienne Delivers a Message—The Marriage of Hortense and Louis Bonaparte—Domestic Difficulties—A Pitiful Dilemma—Quarrels and Reconciliations—Sidelights on General Moreau's Conspiracy—The Death of the Duc d'Enghien.

MY mother's health obliged her to take the waters at Plombières. I went there with her and my cousin, who accompanied by her husband had returned from Dresden. During our stay a number of receptions and balls were given for us. While at Plombières I met several more suitors for my hand, but none was of sufficient rank to disturb my peace of mind, I being still loath to consider matrimony. As I have said I dreamed of marrying a man who was perfect, but I had already discovered that perfection was hard to find. I left Plombières with regret, haunted by painful forebodings. It seemed to me that I was enjoying my last moments of freedom and happiness. I realized that on my return to Paris steps would be taken to arrange a marriage for me. I was seventeen years old. My mother, who at that age had already had her two children, felt I was too old for any further delay.

We had scarcely returned home when she spoke about the matter to the Consul, who agreed with her and added that only one match was worth considering, namely, his brother Louis.

"We may never have children," he went on. "I brought up Louis myself; I look on him as a son. Your daughter is what you cherish most on earth. Their children shall be our children. We will adopt them, and this adoption will console us for not having any of our own.

But it is necessary that our plan meet with the young people's approval."

My mother was delighted with the Consul's proposal. It fulfilled all her desires and charmed her the more since it seemed to mean that I would remain near her.

Bourrienne requested an audience with me one day and addressed me as follows:[1] "I have been commissioned to suggest something to you which your mother and the Consul would be very glad to see take place. They wish you to marry Colonel Louis Bonaparte. He is kind and affectionate. His tastes are simple. He will appreciate you to the fullest degree and is the only suitable husband for you. Look about you. Who is there you would care to marry? The time has come when you must consider the matter seriously. No one until now has appealed to you; and if your heart made a choice that did not meet with your parents' approval, would you be prepared to disobey them? You love France. Do you want to leave it? Your mother cannot bear the thought of your being the wife of some foreign prince who would separate you from her forever. You know it is her great sorrow no longer to hope to have a child. You can remedy this and perhaps ward off a still greater misfortune. I assure you intrigues are constantly being formed to persuade the Consul to obtain a divorce. Only your marriage can tighten and strengthen those bonds on which depends your mother's happiness. Will you hesitate?"

I had let Bourrienne keep on talking without interrupting him. I discovered for the first time that I had in my power to contribute to my mother's peace of mind. How could I refuse? But I needed to become accustomed little by little to the idea of uniting my life with that of a man whom I did not care for especially. Such a proposal required mature consideration. I asked for eight days and promised to give my answer at the end of that period.

My brother had just gone to Lyons with his regiment. He had preceded the Consul. I could not have the ad-

vantage of his advice and, moreover, I felt that it was for me to make my own decision. It was a question of sacrificing my romantic fancies to my mother's happiness. I could not hesitate between the two. In fact this very element of sacrifice had something in it which appealed to me. How sweet it is to give up a thing on behalf of another person, how much sweeter still when that other person is your mother! One thing made me pause. "Is it right," I asked myself, "to marry a man who does not seem to possess all those qualities which you demand? . . . Does one's heart contain everything necessary to make him happy when love is absent from the sentiments with which he inspires you?"

My reason assured me Louis Bonaparte did not displease me, that his conduct toward my cousin had been merely thoughtlessness on his part. Doubtless his kindness would make me love him in time. The ideal being I had created in my imagination did not exist. Time would have shown me my mistake. I must forget my romantic dream. Nor would my future be an unhappy one since it was founded on the affection and esteem of a husband, on the accomplishment of my duty. I arrived at my irrevocable decision, not, however, without being occasionally haunted by visions of felicity which, as the tears that rose to my eyes showed, were dearer to me than I was prepared to admit. The eight days having elapsed I gave Bourrienne my reply, but strange to say, from the day I did so I became calm. All my inner tumult seemed to have passed from me to my mother. Too well aware of my ideas on marriage not to suspect the reasons underlying my acceptance, she wept continuously. Her glances seemed to say, "You are sacrificing yourself for me." I realized that in order to console her I must seem satisfied.

Madame Campan came to Malmaison. She spoke to me about Louis Bonaparte's character. He was generally respected, and she thought he would make me happy. I

was glad to have her opinion. Nevertheless, I revealed to her one of my fears.

"Louis seems to me to be kind-hearted and good," I said to her, "but I do not like the disdain with which he pretends to look upon women and which often appears in his conversation. Will this not be a source of sorrow to the woman who marries him?"

"My dear angel"—that was her name for me—"young men who have grown up as soldiers know few good women. It is natural therefore for them to have a poor opinion of our sex, but no one is better qualified than you are to make your husband change his opinion. Louis will attach all the more value to his wife's virtue because he believes that quality is such a rare one, and you will rejoice in a conversion which you yourself will have brought about."

I was vain. Therefore I accepted what Madame Campan had to say and I no longer worried over the fault I had noticed in the man who was about to become my husband.

We returned to Paris. The Consul sent for his brother, who at the time was with his regiment. They were talking together in my mother's room when I happened to come in. I heard the Consul pronounce the following words, "She is a sweet and virtuous girl." I withdrew at once. My heart was beating violently. I guessed the Consul was speaking of my marriage and that in connection with it he was praising me. Indeed, a few days later the matter was definitely settled and announced. The news was received with joy throughout the palace but especially among the aides-de-camp. They congratulated themselves that I was not leaving them, that they could always consult me about what was uppermost in their hearts. They had feared I would be married off to some foreign prince. One rumor suggested I was to become the bride of the Duke of Cumberland, another named Archduke Charles. All these rumors were with-

out foundation. In fact there could have been no question just then of such a match.

Lucien Bonaparte, who for some time had been a widower, had asked for my hand. The Consul had refused it angrily. Lucien was annoyed and, as I learned later, attempted to dissuade Louis from marrying me. I do not know what he said but Louis became uneasy. He had no opportunities of speaking to me privately as I was always surrounded by people in the drawing-room and I never received anyone in my own apartment. He wrote me a twenty-page letter in which he told me, as it were, the story of his life, which for a long time had gravitated about a young woman named Sophie.[2] He described her in detail and also her tastes and habits. With the happiness he felt when thinking of our marriage there mingled certain fears, for he saw all the world at my feet and could not believe that a simple domestic existence would appeal to me. He begged me in return to describe my past life to him in full. It would have been difficult for me to give him any striking facts on the subject and, when I returned his letter, in accordance with his request, I merely replied that for a long time my life had been known to him. As far as my tastes were concerned, I did not consider that happiness and brilliant social position went together.

He answered: "If your popularity and society have not spoiled you, you must be an angel. There can be no middle ground. You must be all good or all bad." I smiled and thanked him for the compliment. I could not suppose that, admitting the existence of these two alternatives, his opinion could be otherwise than favorable. In these confidences, Louis never mentioned his affection for my cousin. I felt rather badly about this but concealed the fact in order not to cause him any embarrassment. I thought perhaps that it had never existed except in my cousin's imagination, that this love-affair had merely been a dream.

The Consul had not yet said a word to me about my marriage. Finally he spoke of it in the following terms: "Well, so Louis is courting you, is he? That ought to suit you and also your mother. I give my consent to the match."

My mother had not been able to fix the day of the ceremony. She burst into tears each time the subject was mentioned. The Consul consoled her, made fun of her, and, as he was in a hurry to leave for Lyons where the *Consulta* of Milan was waiting to arrange with him the organization of the Italian Republic, he decided I was to marry two days later. I was not well at the time. I asked my mother to obtain a further two days' delay. The Consul consented although annoyed at being obliged to postpone a journey for which all the preparations had been made.

Louis, who had not been told of the new arrangement, called on my mother. He was much upset. He could not understand how one could change the date of such an event. In vain he sought to discover the causes for this modification of the program. When told it had been done at my request he said nothing further but acted as though he sought to conceal a disagreeable impression of some kind. Mother suggested we live near her in the Tuileries. He declined, and the Consul gave us the little house in the rue de la Victoire, considering it natural enough that young married people should wish to have a house of their own and be by themselves.[3] My mother's grief contrasted with my calmness. The more I saw her weep, the more courage I had to seem contented. I was pleased my brother was not present. From him I could not have concealed the truth. He would have guessed that my happiness was not complete. I should have felt sorry for myself when I caught his eye and I needed all my courage to pronounce that "yes" which, while it seemed to be to the beginning of a calm and placid existence, marked the end of those dreams of pure yet vivid

delight which I had cherished ever since I could remember.

On January 3, 1802, my old nurse entered my room. She had heard my marriage was to take place that evening,[4] and wishing to be the first to congratulate me had hurried to Paris from her village. She embraced me with that peculiar tenderness that countrywomen feel all their lives towards those whom they have nourished with their milk. I cannot tell what feelings came over me, but I burst into tears and for a moment was unable to hide a bitter despair, whose intensity frightened me. At the sight of this emotion the joy of the good woman turned to anguish, but I promptly recovered and once more summoned up all my courage.

The day passed drearily enough in the choosing and distributing of various pieces of jewelry to be given the palace servants. They received them with tears in their eyes and expressed their regret that they would no longer wait on me. Such things are always touching, but my courage had returned and I was prepared to face anything without betraying emotion.

My marriage took place in strict privacy. The Consuls Cambacérès and Lebrun, General Bessières and Monsieur Lavallette acted as witnesses.[5] My mother had had a very handsome dress made for me trimmed with flowers. The Consul gave me a set of diamonds (necklace, earrings, bracelet, etc.). When the time came for me to dress it seemed silly to me to make such an effort to appear beautiful. I insisted on wearing only my pearls, a white crêpe dress and carrying a simple bouquet of orange blossoms. Would I have consented to such simplicity had I been more enthusiastic? That I cannot say.

The Consul called for us to take us to the apartments of state where the municipal authorities were waiting for us. We went up his private staircase with my mother. Louis attempted to follow us. The Consul advised him to go up by the grand stairway. This incident seemed to

annoy him. The ceremony took place. Only my mother wept. I was so afraid of saying yes in a weak, trembling voice that I pronounced it louder than, perhaps, I should have done. We went to the rue de la Victoire, where the Cardinal Caprara, who had arrived in France shortly before to attend to affairs connected with the Church, was waiting for us in a temporary chapel.[6] He gave us the nuptial blessing. Murat and Caroline received it at the same time, for when they were married the services of the Catholic faith had not yet been reestablished. This double ceremony produced a disagreeable impression on me. The other couple were so happy. They were so much in love with one another. Was it superstition—or second sight? I felt as though all the happiness lay on one side, all the unhappiness on the other. I reassured myself, however. Everybody told me how kind Louis was, how happy I should be, and I wanted to persuade myself it was true. We went into a drawing-room where the magnificent wedding-presents were displayed. These baubles did not interest me, but my indifference appeared to vex my husband. As soon as I noticed this I did my best to make amends.

The next day we lunched at the Tuileries. The Consul joked with me. My mother still wept. To change her mood he spoke to her of his trip to Lyons and inquired what people were saying about it.

"It is stated," she replied, "that you are going there to have yourself elected King of Italy."

The Consul answered laughingly, "He created kings but would not be one."[7]

In the course of the evening my husband asked mother for a list of the names of all our relatives. He had thought it absurd that our marriage was not announced as is usually done and without consulting his brother had announcement-cards made in the name of my mother and of his own and sent them all over Paris.[8] The Consul heard of this and flew into a rage.

"What are you meddling with now?" he said to my husband. "If I had wished to follow the accepted custom I should have sent out these cards in my own name. Am I not taking your father's place? Isn't it my stepdaughter you married? What right have you to make use of my wife's name without my permission? You should be aware of the fact that since I hold the office of First Consul the French authorities and the foreign ambassadors ought to have been advised of and invited to this wedding, and that it only took place privately in order to avoid the trouble of an elaborate ceremony. They will not understand this oversight and will not realize that you are to blame for it. The stupid things you do, I am held responsible for. You have no business to try to be independent and I will not allow it."

We were distressed by this severe rebuke from the Consul. My husband could hardly forgive his brother for having made such a scene in front of me. Later he repeatedly declared to me, "Although my brother is head of the state he is not the head of the family. Joseph, the eldest brother, holds that rank."

The Consul left Paris with my mother three days after my wedding. Her departure saddened me. I found myself left alone with a husband whose character I had not yet become acquainted with. To be sure I was already aware that little things were able to upset him, but I had firmly resolved to do my best to satisfy him in every respect, to do everything that lay in my power to make him happy. The future now showed itself to me as different from what I had pictured it, but I visualized it as a calm and placid existence.

"If I have children," I said to myself, "I shall give them all my thoughts, all my devotion. Surely they are enough to satisfy, to absorb all the ardor of my nature." I decided that my sole object in life would be to please my husband, to cultivate my natural accomplishments, to safeguard my reputation. I would take the same care

LOUIS BONAPARTE
Portrait by Girodet from the
Collection of Prince Napoleon

to avoid every man who might make the least impression on me as I had previously taken to find my ideal. Should chance place that ideal in my way I was prepared to flee. Or rather I would confess my weakness to my husband, for was not the latter my advisor, my counselor and my friend? All these resolutions reassured me as regards the future and led me to look forward to a life that would be interesting but devoid of storms and tempests.

I recalled Madame Campan's witty remarks about what is called the honeymoon. "The first days of married life," she would say, "are always pure and serene. For a whole month the husband is most attentive, most thoughtful, most gallant. He is never impatient about anything. Pretty soon, however, a cloud appears; that cloud generally takes the form of a dress. The couple are going out. *He* is all ready, notices that he has been waiting some time and ventures to say so emphatically. *She* is *so* astonished. She is upset. Tears are shed. Her husband consoles her, tells her it does not matter, but the scene is reenacted on the morrow. No longer does the consolation take place. The honeymoon has set."

I remembered this little story. In the hope of prolonging the honeymoon beyond the fatal day I trained myself to dress so quickly that I was constantly having to wait for the others. This is one example of the way in which I from the beginning strove to save my husband the least annoyance, being as scrupulously careful about little things as I was painstaking about more important ones. Why did I fail so utterly to succeed?

It was four days after my marriage. I was trying on a corset in my bedroom. Louis came in. Blushing I slipped a scarf over my shoulders. I interrupted my toilet. He wished me to continue dressing. I refused. He insisted. I became more and more embarrassed, and he left the room in a temper. When I saw him again, instead of speaking gently to me and telling me what I had done to hurt his feelings, he addressed me severely.

"Do you not know, madame, that a wife should not be prudish in the presence of her husband? Can you not imagine what the women around you will think of your attitude? They will tell everyone that you do not love me, that you married me against your will." I did not know what reply to make. My mind was in a whirl. How was I to have foreseen such a dispute? I remained motionless with fear and surprise.

The Consul had given us permission to live at Malmaison while he was away. We decided to go there in spite of the cold weather. Adèle Auguié accompanied me. We spent our days walking in the snow-covered woods and our evenings sitting by the fireside. One of Louis' friends who was an officer in the regiment he commanded joined us for a few days. He was rather awkward. While we read aloud and he sat by a table on which were a number of puzzles, he tried them all one after another without being able to solve any of them. We wanted to laugh. Louis, who had just begun a novel, stopped and accused us of making fun of him. This made us serious at once. Unfortunately we happened to glance again at the young officer who could not undo a hoop from the ring puzzle. We again burst out laughing, and neither my husband's air of displeasure nor our own efforts could restrain our mirth. Everything increased our hilarity, which, however, ended on my part by bitter tears. When we were alone my husband said to me very seriously, "Whom do you take me for? Do you believe I am prepared to be treated as though I were a clown? I warn you only a woman of light morals dares laugh at her husband and make sport of him. I would rather leave you than allow myself to be thus humiliated."

Words cannot describe my despair. In an instant I saw all my dreams not only of happiness but even of tranquillity collapse about me. I could not have imagined the existence of a character such as I found myself confronted with. The thought of the future terrified me.

For having committed a childish prank, natural enough considering my age, I found myself treated in this manner. How could I hope to satisfy a nature which took offense at such trifles? I had never been in the habit of weighing a single one of my words or actions. Everything I did met with the approval of those about me. I no longer sought to be praised, but I felt the need of being better understood. A hundred gloomy thoughts besieged my brain, and I felt come over me feelings I had never before experienced. My nerves gave way. Only tears brought relief. My husband, touched and affected by the sight of my grief, sought to console me, but the harm had been done. My only sentiment towards Louis became one of fear. I dared no longer smile or speak in his presence. It always seemed to me he was on the point of losing his temper. Although still filled with a longing to make him happy I felt I no longer knew how to do so.

Madame Campan gave a little party for us at Saint-Germain. She had asked Isabey to paint a thousand incidents of my childhood. One scene showed me entering school; later I was shown taking different lessons; still later a young man appeared as a suitor; in short it was the whole story of my life shown in a series of magic-lantern slides. Before each picture one of my fellow pupils sang an appropriate verse. Several, as they expressed their regrets that I was no longer with them, burst into tears. One of them whispered to Madame Campan, "I can't bear the sight of her husband when I think it is *he* who robbed us of her affections, who took her away from us." Madame Campan repeated this remark to my husband, thinking he would be pleased with it as showing how popular I was. He said nothing. I did the same. I suppressed even the pleasant emotions which these expressions of sincere friendship aroused in me, for I was conscious that Louis was exasperated by them. A phrase showed me to what an extent he had left ill at ease.

"I have been made to look like a fool," he declared

on our return from Saint-Germain. Afterwards he was never willing to return there and assumed a distant attitude towards Madame Campan.

Thus passed my honeymoon, that first month of married life which is said to be the happiest of a woman's life. Be that as it may, in my case, painful though it was, it was nevertheless one of those months during which I was the least unhappy. Hope still remained with me. I still cherished the idea of in some way reclaiming Louis' uneasy, restless nature by my assiduous care.

My mother returned with the Consul. She questioned me closely regarding my home-life. I answered that I was happy, that I was delighted with my husband. She was satisfied—that was all I wanted. Moreover I should have felt I was committing a wrong to complain of the man to whom fate had irrevocably bound me. Only to Adèle's bosom did I confide all my fears for the future. I hoped these effusions might bring relief, that so sincere a friendship might strengthen my courage.

Since she had come back my mother often looked at me attentively. Her eyes seemed to be seeking in my face the first signs of an approaching pregnancy, which she predicted and which shortly afterwards declared itself. My husband, my mother and the Consul were overjoyed. The latter repeatedly told me he hoped I would not have a daughter for he was not prepared to give a girl a warm welcome. As far as my personal wishes were concerned I desired a child, that was all. At the time I was copying the head of a young child in one of Greuze's paintings. I imagined that mine would have some of the features of those of the charming model. Later—was it an illusion or a reality?—I actually found a resemblance between them.

The signing of the Concordat took place about this time [1801], marking the reestablishment of the Catholic religion in France.. The following Easter [9] the Consul attended the services at Notre Dame in great pomp. We

were present in one of the tribunes. From that time on mass was said every Sunday and fête day at the Tuileries.

Adèle was the daughter of Monsieur Auguié, former *receveur général des Finances.* She had two elder sisters who were very dear to me. One of them, Antoinette, godchild of the King and Queen of France, married Monsieur Gamot. Possessing brilliancy of mind together with natural gifts and high moral qualities, she would have been an ornament to society, but her husband's career, the education of her children, an active spirit of charity which led her frequently into the squalid garrets of the poor had confined her activities in a round of duties. Eglé, Adèle's second sister, was very kind, charming and sensitive. We married her to General Ney and I continued to see her frequently.

I was never so happy as when I was with these friends. Three evenings a week we had a drawing lesson. Sometimes it was held at our house, sometimes at that of one of the others. We paid strict attention to the lessons of our teacher Isabey till ten o'clock, when tea was served. My husband and Eglé, who had never sketched before, were the most backward pupils. We sometimes made fun of their landscapes, and they freely admitted their shortcomings. Once when my carriage had failed to arrive I asked Adèle's father to take me home. Louis made another of his scenes, and a serious one at that, because I had not said take *us* instead of take *me.* Apparently he did not count. I excused myself on the ground that I was not yet accustomed to saying *us.* As I did so my fear of constantly hurting his feelings was renewed.

When warm weather brought us back to Malmaison we gave amateur theatricals. Among the Consul's officers there were some very good actors, but frequently, just when the performance was about to take place, the hero or the faithful servant would be sent on a special mission, and the play would have to be put off. My husband, who always knew his lines, enjoyed this amusement.

Several women noted for their charm had recently become members of the household. All the officers attached to the Consul's person were married. General Lannes had married a young Parisian, who was beautiful and well educated; the wife of General Bessières was a girl from his province, kind, gentle and pious. I had just arranged the marriage of General Savary and a relative of mine, Mademoiselle de Faudoas, who had been brought up at Saint-Germain and who was remarkably good-looking; Colonel Caffarelli had married Mademoiselle d'Ecquevilly, and General Junot, Mademoiselle de Permon. The four ladies in waiting whom the Consul had just appointed were noted for their wealth and their excellent reputation. They were Madame de Lucay, Madame de Talhouet, Madame de Lauriston and Madame de Rémusat. The last of these owed her position to my mother's recommendation. Daughter of Monsieur de Vergennes and with a brilliant mind herself, her appointment as lady in waiting and that of her husband as *préfet du Palais* had released them from the financial straits the family had been in since the Revolution.

I generally did not use rouge because I had a good natural complexion, but one day when we had been acting I had so much on that I did not know how to take it off. My maid suggested my mother's face-cream, *crème de rose*. I ran to her dressing-room where she was alone, undressing. Having washed my face I returned at once to my room. Louis had just come in. My maid told him where I was, and I repeated her statement, but he did not say a word. The following day he sat writing in my room, then went out leaving the table covered with the papers he had just written. Undoubtedly they were intended for me, but the thought of reading them never crossed my mind. I should have been afraid of being indiscreet. Consequently I was not in any way alarmed, nor did I imagine for a moment that my husband was angry with me. A few hours later Louis came back and said in a natural tone of voice:

"I've just ordered my carriage. I have to go and see how work at my little country-place at Baillon is getting on."

"Am I to accompany you?" I inquired.

"No, I want to have everything done over. I will be with the workmen all the time. You had better stay here. You'll see me again before long. Then too your mother would make a fuss if you left."

I did not answer and kissed him good-by.

Two or three days went by. I thought a surprise would please him. I spoke of it to mother, who approved of the idea but made me promise to return two days later. I invited Adèle and her sister to supper with me the day I came back on my way through Paris. My husband seemed astonished to see me and treated me coldly. Yet when I prepared to leave he sought to keep me with him.

I told him mother would be alarmed, adding that the Mesdemoiselles Auguié were expecting me for supper. At this mention of a supper of schoolgirls he smiled skeptically and when my carriage arrived stepped in with me. At first he suggested driving with me only as far as the end of the avenue of the estate, but he allowed himself finally to be persuaded to go all the way to Paris, where he was surprised and embarrassed to find that only two young women were waiting for me.

The next day he left again without having made the slightest attempt to explain his conduct. I supposed that his estate amused him and could not imagine any reason for his aloofness. Several days passed. The Consul inquired why Louis stayed away and considered it absurd for a newly married husband to leave the wife he was supposed to love in this manner. I do not know whether he thought we had quarreled, but at any rate he sent for Louis, and as soon as he arrived called him into his study. A few moments later my mother and I were sent for.

"What is this I hear, Hortense?" the Consul said to me as I came in. "Your husband has just cause for complaint

against you? You who I thought were so good! Have you forgotten your domestic duties as a wife?"

"But what have I done?" I exclaimed. "I have not the slightest idea."

"Your husband complains that during your drawing class you and your friends have no regard for his feelings, that you make fun of him, that he receives none of those marks of esteem which he has a right to expect."

"Is it possible," I exclaimed sobbing, "that he believes me capable of forgetting myself to such an extent? If I laugh sometimes, why must he always think I do so at his expense? Why does he not give me his confidence? Why does he not tell me what his wishes are? To please him I am prepared to sacrifice all my pleasures."

"That is true," said the Consul, speaking to Louis. "Why do you conceal your grievances?"

"Ah, how can I express them?" replied my husband. "Whenever I speak to her she bursts into tears."

He had hardly finished speaking when the Consul losing his temper exclaimed: "You do not deserve such a wife. She feels your reproaches, she weeps, and instead of being touched you are irritated by her tears. Do you not feel the joy of knowing you are to become a father?" As he spoke he betrayed his deep emotion that such a happiness was denied him. He went on more gently: "At least appreciate that sign of her affection. You should be at her knees, caring for her, cherishing her; instead of that you hurt her. Ah, Louis, you who I thought were so kind-hearted, so sensitive, I no longer know you."

The Consul's anger dried my tears. I was no longer irritated with my husband's unfair attitude toward me. I pitied him for having incurred this humiliation. Moreover I was well aware that such a scene would tend to irritate his temper rather than calm it.

From then on our life became more and more uncomfortable and constrained. Although endowed with a robust constitution my husband had one hand which was

affected with a wasting disease [10] and whose condition worried him. He wished to take a treatment at the health resort of Barèges in the Pyrenees. The Consul objected again to this trip on the grounds of the inconveniences travelers had to put up with and the comments it was likely to arouse. "People will say I married my stepdaughter to a husband who was a cripple and an invalid." In the end, however, he gave in, for his brother was always obstinate.

Louis wished me to accompany him. My mother did not approve of the idea and even frightened me by describing the bad effects such a long trip might have on me in view of my condition and my duties toward the child I was about to bring into the world. I was torn between these duties and the obedience I owed my husband. He, meanwhile, demanded I declare formally to my mother and the Consul that I wished to accompany him no matter what might be the result.

"Please allow me," I said, "to remain neutral and only be obliged to carry out your wishes when you have convinced the others that you are right."

Frequently he woke me up at night to make me promise to follow him everywhere, even though he might declare he did not wish me to do so. My state of health and the need of sleep, natural in a person of my age, caused me to become extremely impatient with him on these occasions, although I did my best to conceal the fact. I pointed out to him gently that I was anxious to go to sleep. He did not pay much attention to this but kept on declaring that he was the unhappiest man in the world, that he adored me, that I evidently did not care for him as I refused to sacrifice my mother and my foolish ideas to him, that a woman does not have a miscarriage if she travels in a comfortable conveyance.

"I will follow you," I told him, "no matter what my mother and my doctor say, but should a misfortune occur at least let me have the consolation that it was a result of

your orders, not through any fault of my own." It never occurred to him to postpone his trip to Barèges and he left after having given up the idea of taking me with him. He wept freely when he bade me good-by. I was touched by his tears. Anyone who at that moment had said to me that I did not love my husband dearly would have seemed to me to be an enemy of mine. But a moment was enough to show me the true state of my feelings. I shall never forget the painful sensation I had when I heard the carriage roll away that was taking Louis from me; I felt I was breathing more freely.

"Great heavens," I exclaimed overcome with anguish, "the man who should be the soul of my soul, my husband, is leaving my side, and I am delighted! How guilty such a feeling is! He is right, I do not love him." I burst into tears. As I did so I vowed that by my care for his comfort, my thoughtfulness on his behalf, by the most scrupulous obedience to his wishes I would try to make up to him for those sentiments my heart could not feel toward him. I finally resolved to redeem as far as was in my power my crime, inevitable though it was, of not loving the man who did so little to arouse my sentiment.

During my husband's absence I stayed with my mother. My husband's cold and constrained letters showed me clearly enough he was unhappy, that his imagination had created a vision of happiness different from any I was able to offer him. Each time word came from him my heart beat violently, and each time I reproached myself for not knowing how to make him happy.

At the time a young Spanish girl was at school at Saint-Germain. She was the daughter of Monsieur Hervas and would inherit a great fortune. The Consul had thought of a marriage between her and Colonel Duroc and told me to arrange matters. I was delighted to do so. Duroc had once shown he cared for me and I had not forgotten the fact. To help him be happy was a sign of my gratitude. One day when I was describing Made-

moiselle Hervas' merits to him and speaking of the interest a young girl of thirteen inspired and how delightful a task it must be to make life pleasant for her, he replied, "I realize my good fortune, but all of that does not console me for having lost you." This was the only word he ever uttered which reminded me of the past. In fact I saw much more of his wife than I did of him. He always seemed to avoid me, fearing perhaps that the Consul might think that his affections for me would tempt him to betray the secrets which were confided to him. When Mademoiselle Hervas was told that her husband had been in love with me she said: "If he loved Hortense, that proves his good taste. If he had been loved by her that would have proved his merits." Her remark shows that she had been brought up at Saint-Germain where everyone spoiled me. She never ceased to trust me implicitly, and I always felt strongly attached to her.

My greatest pleasure was still to return to Saint-Germain to play and run about with my schoolfellows and sometimes even share their lessons. One day when I entered Madame Campan's room, proud of a prize I had just won, which I insisted on taking with me, I encountered one of the fashionable beauties of the aristocratic Faubourg Saint-Germain. Madame Campan hastened to assure her that there was no need to be scandalized, that her other boarders did not have the more than matronly figure I possessed, that I was duly married but preferred the society of my former schoolfellows to the formal receptions at court. The noble dame could not hide her astonishment and failed to understand such childish tastes. The incident was talked about in Paris. My husband wrote me about it and found fault with my behavior, while my mother lectured me on the danger of running about in such fashion in my condition. I was obliged to give up my visits to school.

Mother went to Plombières for her health and left me

to do the honors at Malmaison. All the young ladies who were staying there at the time were also expecting babies. We spent our mornings sitting together embroidering bonnets for the children we were about to have and talking about our plans for them. We did not go downstairs to the drawing-room till six o'clock. The Consul would come to dinner and in the evening, when he was not working, would play chess with me. He was so absent-minded that I always won, thereby acquiring a reputation of great skill. As a matter of fact, the Consul, not particularly good at chess, was always thinking more about other things than about the game. Usually not particularly courteous, serious rather than gay, he frightened all our young ladies, who only dared answer yes and no to the curt sentences in which he addressed them. For this reason my mother, although highly susceptible, was never alarmed by the idea that her husband was surrounded by pretty women.

On Sundays singers would come out from Paris. Among them was a certain Mademoiselle Rolandeau, a pretty actress. I do not know whether the Consul paid any attention to her, but I received a letter from my mother filled with reproaches. She had heard, she said, that this actress had come to Malmaison. I should not have allowed it. Yet what did that have to do with me? My mother was hurt and did not weigh her words or acts. She suddenly left Plombières where she was taking the cure, and I have often heard the Consul blame her for having sacrificed the care of her health, the possibility perhaps of having children, to an impulse of ill-considered jealousy.

A dance was held at Malmaison for some holiday or other. I only danced once. The next day I saw in a newspaper [11] verses describing my state of health and my dancing. I complained to Bourrienne about it. Praise under such circumstances was unwelcome to me, and I disliked intensely those articles which told the public

what I was doing. Bourrienne answered mysteriously, "Do not complain; it was probably printed on purpose. You have no idea of the despicableness of the English papers. It was perhaps necessary for the French press to refute them." I failed to see the connection between some verses about me and the political situation. I begged him to explain. He refused to do so. It was not till long afterwards I found out that the English newspapers had declared I had been delivered of a child when I was only in my seventh month of pregnancy. Meanwhile the time for the birth of my child drew near.

The house I was living in was too small. The Consul gave me another one,[12] very charming, also rather small and with a delightful garden. I moved in and awaited the return of my husband.

The birth of a child bearing the name of Bonaparte was an event of considerable interest to all of France. The Consul had been appointed Consul for life, but he had no son. The fact that he had restored order increased his popularity throughout France and seemed already to indicate on the part of the public a desire to invest the supreme power in his family.

Little means are frequently employed to prepare the public for important changes that are still far in the future. I was greatly surprised one day when my nurse came from her village [13] to tell me that my child would be born in October and that a son of mine would some day rule over France. I laughed at her skill as fortune-teller and told her that as a matter of fact I did expect to become a mother in October. Delighted with the news she showed me a little almanac called "Mathieu Laensbergh," widely read in the country districts, which predicted the changes of the weather and notable events that would take place. According to this almanac a child would be born in October who would reign over the greatest country in Europe. The poor old woman had come to find out if I was about to fulfil this prophecy. I

thought it likely that the prophet was a member of the secret police and I later learned that all governments use these humble means to create in people's minds impressions of one kind or another. The maneuver in the present instance would later fit in with the announced intention of the Consul to adopt my son if I had one.

I had one preconceived opinion in regard to my health; namely, that unless a mother was bled during her period of pregnancy the child was apt to be sluggish in temperament and liable to catch serious diseases. Although in perfect health I kept bothering my doctor insisting on the need of this bleeding. Already, after a walk where I had been caught in the rain, I had had an incision made in my arm with a lancet, but the vein was so faintly visible that the surgeon had been obliged to make two incisions. This blood-letting, which might have proved harmless at another time, affected my nerves. As chance would have it my husband returned the same day it took place. His unfriendly attitude upset me and made me unhappy. Though I was aware of the fact I no longer loved him, though I had already given up all hope of being happy myself, I still wished to make him happy, in spite of his far from optimistic character. I redoubled my efforts to achieve this end. All proved fruitless. Moreover they did me harm in still further affecting the state of my health.

With my doctor [14] I had calculated the moment when my child should be born. He told me that women often made mistakes of two and even three weeks, especially if it was a boy, that he would not be surprised if the event took place at a date he mentioned and which was about the first of October. As I had been married the third of January this would have made just three days less than nine months after my marriage. Greatly surprised and amused I hastened to tell this to my husband, but he replied gloweringly, "If such a thing happened I would not see you again as long as I lived." [15]

"What," I exclaimed in despair, "can it be that you suspect me?"

"No, I know the truth. But it is on account of what people would say." [16]

Imagine my fears and at the same time the delight with which I saw the first few days of October slip by. Although I was relieved of the fear of being publicly shamed by the man who should have been my natural protector, I suffered cruelly from his attitude. I felt that I was alone, deprived of any comforter on earth, with no source of help but such as I could find in my own heart, no other consolation except what my conscience was able to give me.

The Consul returned with my mother from a trip they had taken to Rouen and Havre.[17] I went with them to the Louvre where there was an exposition, the first of its kind, of all the articles produced by French industry. The Consul Cambacérès gave me his arm, many foreigners were present and the crowd was very great. Easily tired I sat for a long while in one of the stalls where Monsieur Fox, who was just then in Paris, happened to be. The Consul had a great regard for this statesman.

The ninth of October was another large reception at the Tuileries. I attended it and on the tenth, just nine months after the date on which my husband and I withdrew to Malmaison was seized with such intense pains that my brother, who had come to see me, hurried off to get my mother. She arrived at Saint Cloud and took the tenderest care of me. Nor did my husband leave my side. Both were overjoyed when at nine o'clock in the evening I gave birth to a boy.[18] My nurse and my attendants exclaimed "Look at our Dauphin." My husband did not like these exclamations and had them immediately silenced. He appeared much pleased that the child was a boy. Two days later the Consul came to see me. As for me my joy was inexpressibly intense. I did not allow my son's cradle to be taken out of the room for an instant.

I always kept him on my bed. I looked at the sleeping child; I hung over his slumbering form. I regretted bitterly not being able to nurse him, but my husband and mother both opposed my wishes, pointing out how difficult it was to nurse a child before one was twenty. The welfare of my son must take precedence over everything. Indeed, had I been his nurse, I could not have tended him more constantly, more tenderly than I did. When I was well enough to get up again, if he was not able to go out I stayed at home. I was unhappy the moment he and I were separated. My husband worshiped him as much as I did. As he was following a treatment just then that did not allow him to go out, the child was obliged to be always in his room. The baby was the only bright spot in our home, which otherwise was as bare and cold as ever. Adèle came occasionally to see me in the morning. She was my only companion.

The Consul's aides-de-camp had of course noticed that their visits to me were not welcome from the fact they were always told I was not at home. They accused me of being overproud, as though I were responsible for this state of things; they considered that it was my position, which was daily becoming more important, which prevented me from receiving them with as much friendliness as I had done previously. However painful such an opinion was to me I bore it well enough. I preferred to be misjudged rather than reveal to others a jealousy which, so it seemed to me, would have made both my husband and me look ridiculous. Nevertheless, the officers' young wives still looked on me as a friend and advisor, and on several occasions I reunited husband and wife who were temporarily estranged. If I told my husband about these things in order to keep him informed of everything I was doing, he looked displeased. The deference, the consideration in which I was held were disagreeable to him.

Once [19] the Consul called with my mother. Annoyed

at not finding my husband at home he said nothing and walked about alone in the garden. My mother informed me that he came intending to ask for our son, whom he intended to adopt. This idea startled me but being prepared to trust the future of our child to Providence I dared not formulate any objection. In the evening Caroline told me the rest of the Bonaparte family on being informed of the Consul's idea had opposed it vigorously, declaring that his brothers had more claim to succeed him than my son and that they were prepared to defend these claims. How many enemies already arrayed against a poor child still in its cradle! I spoke of this to my husband, who assured me he would never give up his son. He showed me a letter in which he announced this to the Consul, at the same time advising the latter to obtain a divorce as the only means of arranging matters. I felt worried about my husband, perturbed about my mother, who that evening looked sad and downhearted. She, also, told me that all his family were advising the Consul to repudiate her. The Consul for the first time treated me like a grown-up person, spoke to me about his wish to adopt an heir and seemed hurt at my husband's attitude. I asked him not to oblige me to take sides on such a question and to allow me to obey a husband who was perhaps justly alarmed to see so much antagonism centering about his child. The Consul said nothing for a moment, then broke the silence with the remark, "I shall pass a law that will give me authority over my family." [20]

As Louis feared to spend the winter in Paris on account of his health, it was decided we should go to Italy. The Consul gave his consent to the plan on condition that our journey take place with a certain amount of state. The ladies who were to receive me in each town had already been chosen, the gifts I was to make them had already been bought, the moment of our departure had come. My mother had chosen as my lady in waiting Madame de

Boubers, daughter of the Chevalier de Folard, who lost her fortune in the Revolution. She was noted for her courage and her high moral standards. My husband detested having anyone stay with us. It was useless for me to point out to him that our social position made this inevitable. He constantly accused his brother of wishing to annoy him; he could not understand why people should not be allowed to travel as they pleased. When the question of taking his son with us came up, and the Consul objected to it on account of the child's extreme youth, Louis was unable to restrain his anger. All these petty trifles made him so unhappy that I did not know what to do to pacify him. The idea of leaving his son in the care of his brother excited him violently. Finally the tears he saw me shed, as the moment approached when I should be separated from the child I loved so dearly, seemed to make him decide to give up the trip to Italy and instead go to Montpellier alone in order to consult the physicians there. He explained to me in an entirely natural manner that he was only leaving me behind in order that his son should not leave home. The reason seemed a good one to me. I accepted the suggestion. Was this intended as a trap? Later he reproached me for it. He misinterpreted the tears a mother shed at the thought of leaving her son. He declared it was clear I did not love him since I had not accompanied him, but had preferred to stay with my child. Yet it was he who had proposed this arrangement. Nevertheless he wrote affectionately enough, but his letters were full of sentences, of pieces of advice, which I could not understand.

When he was leaving he forbade me very solemnly to go to live at Saint Cloud under any pretext when the Consul and my mother went there, and never to stay there overnight. I objected that my mother would find such conduct rather extraordinary and asked what excuse I could give for it.

"You have no reason to give an excuse," he replied.

"You are no longer a child. A married woman should stay at home. You can go and have dinner there, but if you spend the night I warn you I will divorce you."

I was unable to obtain any explanation. I kept thinking how I was to behave, what explanation I could give my mother, who would certainly wish me to stay with her. Finally I thought I had found a way out. I arranged to take a great many lessons, so that all my mornings were occupied by my singing, my painting, my harp or my piano. I went to dinner at Saint Cloud with my son, who never left me, and I returned in the evening in order not to miss my lesson the next morning. My mother did not dare object although several times she saw me drive off in very bad weather in spite of her entreaties that I remain.

It happened one day that the Consul while attempting to drive a six-horse coach met with an accident [21] and was thrown a distance of twenty paces. My mother's alarm was so great that it upset her nerves. She begged me to remain with her. What was I to do? Torn between the threats of my husband, the entreaties of my mother, between fear and filial duty, I did not know what decision to make when my mother burst into tears and exclaimed, "My daughter no longer loves me."

"It is easy enough to understand," added the Consul, "Hortense is enjoying herself in Paris. We are old, our company bores her."

I was in agony. The thought that my mother could imagine that I no longer loved her and that I would sacrifice the joy of nursing her for some frivolous amusement was so utterly unbearable that I threw caution to the winds and told all about my husband's command.

"What is that?" said the Consul standing up suddenly. "Your husband issued such an order? What can be his reasons for it? Does he get his information from the English slander-sheets? Write him that a husband cannot separate a daughter from her mother. When her hus-

band is away where is a wife's place if not beside her natural protector? A woman as blameless as you has the right to speak her mind firmly and not to accept such ridiculous restrictions."

It did not take long for me to become conscious of the mistake I had made in revealing my secret. On the one hand, the Consul's anger against Louis worried me dreadfully; on the other, my mother, who was incapable of keeping any of her feelings to herself, went about complaining to the ladies in waiting about Louis' strange idea of forbidding me to live near her. The public soon heard about it and drew its own conclusions. People are never interested in the truth. The new and bizarre are what appeal to the crowd of idlers who make up society. My husband, who had word that I had not obeyed his orders, wrote me only cold, distant notes. A journey through Belgium which my mother and the Consul undertook finally put an end to this painful situation.

As they were leaving, two young men, members of the Tascher family and cousins of my mother, arrived from Martinique.[22] She did not have the slightest idea what to do with them and asked me to look after the new arrivals. I took care of the younger, who was not in good health. As for the older, who was already eighteen, I was prudent enough not to ask him to stay at our home. I already knew my husband's character too well. The young man was housed in our old house and came to see me every day.

The Consul's aides-de-camp, who on this occasion were leaving their young wives for the first time, confided them to my care with that confidence they always felt toward me. The ladies came and spent the day at my home regularly. Their children, who were about the same age as mine, came with them and formed our principal topic of conversation. Frequently we would all go together to a play or for a walk, and afterwards each one would take her darling back with her. We also visited the suburbs

of Paris [23] [accompanied by Monsieur Auguié, the father of Adèle, and my two cousins]. I felt myself so thoroughly responsible for the conduct of my young ladies that at a party given by Madame de Luçay at Montmorency I ventured to blame one of them for her provocative attitude toward a young Russian who was trying to make himself too agreeable to all of us. I reminded her of her husband, of her duties, and she listened to my advice as though it had been that of her mother. Indeed never have gatherings been more innocent and pure than ours were; our only interests consisted in caring for our babies and receiving letters from the travelers. I still possess the little account Colonel Savary wrote us describing all the receptions offered the Consul and my mother on their trip.

The behavior and charm of these young women were so widely spoken of that they aroused the jealousy of certain Parisian beauties. Madame Hamelin, noted and feared for her biting wit, replied to someone who was praising the morals of the Consul's court, "What else can you expect? All these young women have just been married. They adore their husbands. There's little enough merit in that. Wait a few years before forming an opinion and then you may tell a different tale." We were indignant on being told Madame Hamelin's prophecy. Each declared she would prove the cynic was mistaken. As a matter of fact, only one of the group ever was talked about, and she, I admit, was precisely the one who had been flirting at Montmorency.

The Consul and my mother returned from Belgium after having been received everywhere with demonstrations of great joy and enthusiasm. I continued dining daily with my son at the Tuileries. The Consul made him sit in the middle of the table and let him touch everything. He gave him wine and coffee and though he frequently made the child cry by pinching his cheek or by kissing him too hard, he knew how to win his affection.

Every time the Consul entered the drawing-room my son would stretch out his arms toward him. This seemed to please my stepfather, and even when he was most preoccupied his face would brighten at the sight of his nephew.

Once,[24] when a morning reception was being held in my mother's apartment, where the ladies at that time were presented to the Consul before being admitted to one of the formal receptions, we waited several moments for him to come downstairs. My son was in his nurse's arms. The Consul came in looking very preoccupied, which made us think that the conversation would not be a long one. My son, who was tired of staying in one spot, held out his arms. The Consul noticed this, took him from the nurse and continued to walk back and forth. We watched him. He seemed so absent-minded that we feared he would forget the precious burden he was carrying. However, after a little while he handed the baby back to the nurse still without having said a word. Annoyed at being quiet once more the little boy began to cry and once more stretched out his arms. The Consul picked him up again, and this performance lasted half an hour without a word having been spoken. Finally a message came that the ambassadors were waiting. We entered the drawing-room. The Consul spoke a few words to the ladies, but he soon stepped up to Whitworth, the English Ambassador, and the entire room heard the bitter reproaches with which he assailed him. He spoke of the treaties the English had violated, of the bad faith of the government. I cannot recall his expressions but the tone in which they were spoken made everyone silent with surprise and fear. His anger had made him forget the presence of other people. My mother continued talking to the ladies and attempted to cover his voice by affectionate words in order to palliate the disagreeable effects she feared so violent a discussion would produce.

On his return to his study the Consul seemed to have

shaken off a heavy burden. His anger had vanished. It was I and my mother who now looked worried.

"Well," he said, almost jokingly, "what is the matter? What has happened?"

My mother reproved him gently, saying, "You frightened everybody. What will the ladies who did not know you, who had been so happy to have the opportunity to meet you, think of you now? Instead of being pleasant and polite to them, you insist on talking politics. It really wasn't the moment for that."

"Do you mean to say they heard me?" continued the Consul. "It's true I made a mistake. I did not want to come down today. Talleyrand had been telling me things that annoyed me, and then that long, lank idiot (*flandrin*) of an ambassador stuck himself right under my nose."

All Paris heard of the scene that had just taken place. It marked the end of the peace. Hostilities were renewed shortly afterward.

By way of retaliation for the English having seized French frigates without warning the Consul gave orders to arrest all Englishmen who happened to be traveling in France and hold them as prisoners of war.[25] This action seemed so unfair to us that we were deeply grieved about it. We were not able to conceal from my stepfather our sorrow at seeing him act in such a way.

"You should have nothing to do with actions which are not just and noble," declared my mother.

He took her in his arms and embraced her as he replied, "You are children both of you."

The Consul was more susceptible to criticism than he cared to admit. As he was in the habit of giving matters mature consideration before making any decision, the decision once made remained inflexible. Yet, if his plans did not coincide with that narrow line of conduct which commands popular approval, they seemed to him to be unsatisfactory, and he attempted to remedy this weakness by

assuming a very stern air. If his wishes were carried out, then the severer he had been before, the more gracious he became afterwards. This was the moment to ask him for favors. For then he felt he could grant any request without appearing overindulgent, the one thing he was always afraid of. At such times, his one desire was to be obliging and to make you forget his severity. My mother, who saw him one day in one of these good-natured moods, asked permission for a young Englishman [who had done our family some favors in Martinique] [26] to be allowed to remain in Paris. He granted her request. Encouraged by her success, I in turn asked the Consul to intervene on behalf of another Englishman who, so I was told, was unhappy at being shut up at Fontainebleau.[27] Immediately both orders were written by Eugène, who happened to be present, and signed by the Consul himself. A fortunate incident in the case of our protégés, who were never afterwards disturbed in any way by the authorities.

Shortly afterwards,[28] my husband returned from Montpellier, still cold towards me and giving me no reason for this attitude. This disagreeable state of things, regrettable and uncomfortable though it was, was still preferable to those continual reproaches which had disturbed my nights and saddened my days. The love I felt toward my son was enough to fill my heart, nor did I any longer venture to complain of my fate since I had someone on whom I could shower my tender and boundless affection. Had I been passionately in love with my husband, a little natural pride and self-respect might have made me accept for a long time the kind of life I was obliged to put up with. But the memory of his tears, the sad knowledge that I feared him instead of loving him made me unwilling to continue a state of things which was perhaps still more painful to him than to me. The more satisfied I felt at being left alone, the more I considered it my duty to try to meet him half-way. But what an effort it was to make the first step! What could I talk about to

a man whose severe, cold manner seemed to be both a reproach and an indictment? The very vehemence of my repulsion gave me strength to overcome it. Whenever I feel that a thing ought to be done, no matter what it may involve in the way of suffering for me, a violent impulse helps me to perform it.

It was this that enabled me to approach my husband and tell him that he was risking both his happiness and my own, that his continual doubts as to my affection were both a mistake and an insult. The reluctance with which I took this step, my uneasiness of mind, all combined to make me shed tears which might have been attributed to unrequited affection. Louis was touched, nevertheless he replied, "We shall remain apart. I am happier like that."

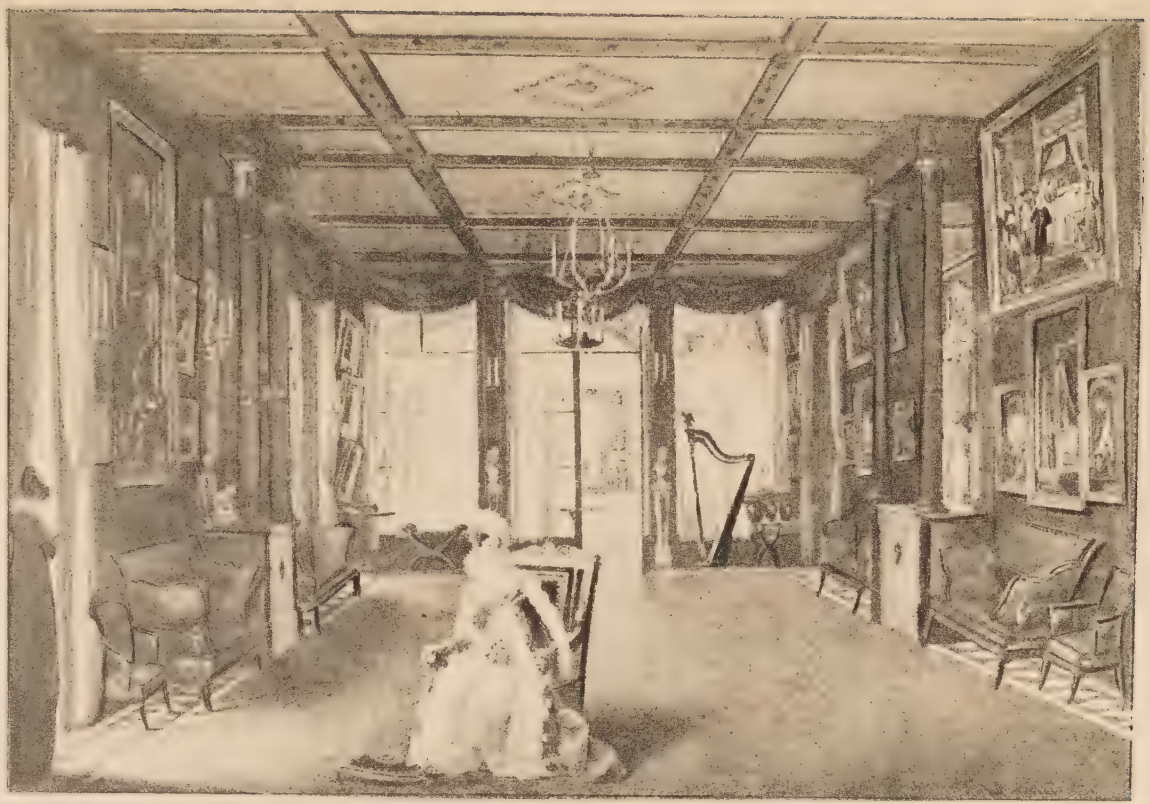
I do not know what was going on in his mind, but in spite of the tenderness he displayed he hurried off, seemingly extremely agitated. I remained alone, as pleased with myself as if I had performed the most heroic deed that has ever been accomplished. My conscience was at rest. No longer could I be held responsible for our disagreements. When I saw my husband the next day I astonished him by my calmness. He kept glancing at me frequently, expecting to find some trace of sorrow on my face, but all he could see there was the serenity that comes from a clear conscience. Busying myself continually with my son, I laughed and danced about with him and did not appear more chagrined in any way than before we had had our talk. Several days passed. Finally Louis announced to me that his mind was made up and he wished to be reconciled with me. At the time this only appeared strange to me, but since then, having become familiar with his unfortunate, constantly distrustful state of mind, I realize that my advances had aroused suspicions which my subsequent calmness had dispelled.

"You assured me," I replied, "you were happy away from me. I cannot forget this. Let us be friends but do not talk of a reconciliation."

He left me angrily and hastened to announce to his family that he wished a divorce. When they heard this piece of news, my brother, my mother, the Consul, Lucien, everybody sought to bring us together again, and thanks to their combined efforts a reconciliation was once more arrived at. Louis' only just cause for complaint was that I did not love him sufficiently.

He was greatly annoyed at an event which took place about this time—his appointment as brigadier general. I have never seen a man worry so much about anything as Louis did about this matter. He kept accusing his brother of offending him on purpose. The same scene took place when he was made a member of the Council of State. It was useless for me to point out, by way of consolation, that it was quite natural for his brother to act as he did, nor could the latter be expected to realize that Louis would dislike a promotion which would have delighted so many other men. All these arguments had no effect. He was fond of the regiment which he commanded and was so deeply grieved at the idea of leaving it that the Consul allowed him to remain in command in spite of his new rank. His brigade was stationed at Compiègne and it was there we went to spend the winter.[29] I took with me my son and Madame de Boubers. The reviews, the beautiful balls, the receptions which were given in my honor were the only notable incidents of our stay.

I had been so much in the habit of seeing my mother entertain at our house that I was accustomed to act as hostess. No one compared with her in the art of making some pleasant, appropriate remark to each guest. With such a good model before me, I had learned how to attend to other people's enjoyment. To do so, indeed, was one of the duties of my position. I realized the fact and tried to perform my task to the best of my ability. All the local nobility, the government officials and the military authorities called on me regularly. I made a point



ONE OF THE DRAWING-ROOMS AT MALMAISON
Water-Color by A. Garnerey in the Collection of Prince Napoleon

of speaking to each guest without making any distinctions, questioning even the minor officers about their campaigns. These acts of mere politeness displeased my husband. I was obliged to refrain from them. The Consul knew that I was popular at Compiègne. He wished me to arrange a marriage which he had heard talked about. A thing like that would have produced a good effect. The Consul was prepared to offer the dowry himself. The bridegroom was to be some soldier who had won a girl's heart in spite of his lack of wealth. My husband would never let me have anything to do with this matter. He disliked everything that made me conspicuous. His attitude made me feel uncomfortable even when I was doing good, for a good action on my part shocked him as much as another's misdeed.

While we were at Compiègne I was expecting my second child. Louis often said to me, "I ask only one thing, to have this baby look like me."

"What can I do about that?" I would reply.

"If you loved me, if you thought often enough about me, he would look like me. Then I would adore you and be the happiest man in all the world."

I could not help smiling at the solemn manner in which this was expressed, nevertheless the importance he attached to it sometimes worried me in view of the future. However, his wish was fulfilled, but he was not able to realize it till much later, for it is unusual for a child at birth to have any clearly defined resemblance to anyone.

The conspiracy of George made us return suddenly to Paris. The city wore a new aspect. It seemed as though it had been placed under martial law. The Consul's guards were stationed at intervals around the walls. People did not go walking beyond the gates. The Parisians were interested in the new state of things. They were curious, surprised, but neither alarmed nor displeased although the new rules deprived them of some of

their usual amusements. They were aware that only the conspirators were being sought by the police. In town, receptions and balls followed one another as usual.

Every night after having made their tour of inspection, the officers came back and danced as though nothing were disturbing the public peace. After a time all the conspirators had been arrested. General Murat had just been made military governor of Paris.

Shortly after my marriage, I had been fairly intimate with Madame Moreau, the daughter of Madame Hulot, who owned property in Ile de France.[30] She was pretty and gifted but rather affected and even stiff in her manner. Her chief characteristic was her ambition. I remember one day how after making numerous excuses for refusing an invitation to a ball which she was urging me to attend, I finally told her that my husband would not care to have me go. She expressed her surprise at such a submissive attitude and declared she thought I was wrong in being so obedient, that it would never occur to General Moreau to forbid her such an innocent form of amusement. Her mother, who was present, added, "When a woman knows how to manage matters she can make her husband do as she likes. Ah, our household is better run than yours is, that's evident." I mention this remark because I believe that in Moreau's conspiracy the General was influenced by his mother-in-law. Her daughter's marriage had turned Madame Hulot's head. She fancied that he was entitled to all the honors that were to be had. Although the Consul was the leading citizen of the Republic she felt in a position to treat him disdainfully.[31] Once she came to Malmaison without having been invited. Her son-in-law at the time was in command of the army on the Rhine. The Consul, whose attitude never lent itself to any familiarities, was astonished by this conduct. I do not know whether he knew of the remarks made about him in Moreau's household, but when he entered the drawing-room he merely

bowed to Madame Hulot without speaking to her. At dinner where I, not yet being married, was in the habit of giving up my seat beside my stepfather to any distinguished guest, he asked me and another lady to sit on either side of him. Madame Hulot remained alone at the end of the table. Although my mother spoke to her frequently and attempted to dispel the unpleasant effect of the Consul's chilling reception, she did not succeed. Madame Hulot was so vexed that in the evening she could not refrain from saying, "The great man really has very little control over his feelings." From that day on, she hated the Consul.

Perhaps it was in spite of himself that Moreau became my stepfather's enemy. His mother-in-law and his wife had played upon his naturally weak and yielding nature. He had the reputation of being a stanch supporter of the Republic at a time when, as a matter of fact, he was conspiring with the enemies of France. This reputation was shared by those hostile to the Consul, and yet, with the exception of Carnot and La Fayette, who were really sincere in their devotion to the republican form of government, I did not know of any so-called republicans who did not rally to support his cause so long as it was successful. It was when changes threatened that they remembered they were sons of the Revolution and complained of having been enslaved. An example of the mentality of Napoleon's enemies may be seen in the case of Moreau when he declared he would present his cook a "saucepan of honor" to ridicule the Consul's fine gesture when he distributed "swords of honor" among his troops.[32]

The receptions of Madame Moreau were reputed to be the most fashionable in Paris. She gave sumptuous balls which were attended by all the nobility of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and was on intimate terms with persons known to hate the existing government.

When General Moreau was arrested, cries of indigna-

tion were raised throughout the Faubourg. The Consul was accused of being jealous of his ability, and the conspirators found many sympathizers. I am well aware that political crimes always deserve a certain amount of indulgence. But surely our moral sense must refuse to condone those which involve the assassination of a human being. The principal persons involved in this conspiracy were the Generals Moreau, Lajolais, Pichegru, George, and Messieurs de Polignac and de Rivière. The two last, just back from England and prominent on account of their families, talked as if the killing of the Consul were something any gentleman should take part in. This view prevailed in a number of salons. Consequently their death sentence was received with astonishment. Perhaps opinions held by sincere fanatics are especially contagious, or perhaps the fact that the Consul was safe caused me to pity those who were about to die. At any rate, the sentences pronounced filled me with grief. Our every thought was how we might secure their repeal.

It was agreed that I should take the daughter of General Lajolais to Saint Cloud with me, while Caroline did the same with the sister of another of the condemned men. The two girls were to throw themselves at the feet of the Consul and plead for the culprit. I cannot yet describe without emotion the feeling that oppressed me. The memory of my father's death on the scaffold, with no one intervening on his behalf, haunted me and made me pity yet more the unfortunate girl who accompanied me. The hope of saving a man from such a fate, the fear of failure moved me to such an extent that when we arrived at Saint Cloud, I was all in tears, a thousand times more wrought up than my young companion, who looked at me in astonishment. Passers-by might indeed have made a mistake as to which of us was about to plead for her father's life. My mother was worried as to the effect these scenes would have on my health. The Consul was touched and hastened to relieve my distress by granting

my prayer. Caroline was also successful with her protégé. My mother had taken upon herself the defense of those who were the most guilty. The Consul resisted in the case of Messieurs de Polignac and de Rivière. They had been the aides-de-camp of the Comte d'Artois and were especially sent from England to assassinate the head of the French Government. He thought that clemency in this instance would encourage similar expeditions in the future. My mother, however, kept bringing up the matter until her very evident grief obtained what his political wisdom refused. Moreau had not been condemned to death. His wife begged that he be allowed to go to America and came to see me about this. She was unhappy, I pitied her distress, and the Consul agreed to everything without raising any objections.

My house was very close to that of Caroline, who had bought the Thélusson mansion in the rue Cerutti. My husband and I went there every day. One evening [33] Caroline said to me sadly, "They have just taken the Duc d'Enghien to the fortress of Vincennes. His trial will take place tonight." This news chilled me with horror. Kept in ignorance of all political happenings, we could not understand the reasons for this arrest. Nevertheless, the fact that a member of the former French royal family should have been kidnaped, brought to Paris, and tried by night seemed to us a sinister event. That this act of severity should take place under the rule of the Consul who had dried so many tears, bound up so many wounds, filled us with grief on his account. To us Bonaparte seemed too great to be obliged to do things of this sort.

The next day I went to Malmaison early. I found my mother overcome with alarm. She had just heard that the Duc d'Enghien had been shot that morning at daybreak. Her grief was intense, not only for the victim but also for the Consul.

"This is the first mistake Napoleon has made," she

said. "Till now his fame has been so stainless. Who can have advised him to do this? Had I known of it soon enough, I should have prevented him. His sorrowful air when he told me the news proved to me that it was not he who had given the order. When he saw my tears he exclaimed vehemently, 'Do you want to see me assassinated?'" My mother kept repeating over and over again, "Who can have influenced him?"

I said nothing and shared her emotions. Just then Caulaincourt entered the room. He had been away on a mission to Strasbourg and Karlsruhe, and had only that moment returned.

"You have heard the dreadful news?" my mother asked him.

"What news, madame?"

"The Duc d'Enghien has been executed."

"Great God!" exclaimed Caulaincourt. "Can that be true? Has the Consul involved me in some way in the matter?" Tears flowed down his cheeks.

"But where have you been?" inquired my mother.

"On a mission near Strasbourg, delivering a letter to Karlsruhe. That is all I know about it."

"When I heard that you were off to the Rhine," replied my mother, "I feared you had been employed on some such disastrous mission."

"Would to God I had been!" exclaimed Caulaincourt. "I would have had the young Prince warned. I cannot forget that I was once in his service, that I was one of his gentlemen in waiting, and if the Consul had given me such an order I should only have carried it out by saving the Prince's life."

I heard every word of what I am recording. How did it happen therefore that the public should have so insistently accused Caulaincourt of having led the Prince into a trap? Is it more difficult to believe the truth than falsehood? I here add what else I learned in regard to this matter.

A royalist insurgent condemned to death had, in order to save his own life, confessed everything he knew about the conspiracy. He declared that Moreau had seen George in Paris and likewise another person whom he did not know but whom everyone treated with the greatest respect. At the time this person was thought to be a prince of the house of Bourbon. The Duc d'Enghien lived near the Rhine, he was frequently away from home, and he was in communication with the Consul's enemies in France; assassins crossed over from England and landed on the seacoast; the Consul's life was constantly being threatened. Those who had taken part in the Revolution feared the return of the family it had driven from the throne. They were now in office, and a change would threaten their position. All these motives combined to bring about the arrest of the Duke. General Ordener crossed the river in rowboats with a strong detachment of troops (it was he himself who told me about it). He brought the Duc d'Enghien to Paris. The court which tried him was composed of several colonels and presided over by General Hulin. Savary attended the trial only as a spectator. He was not one of the judges, but his regiment being stationed at Vincennes, his going there was a precautionary measure. General Murat, Governor of Paris, had given orders to that effect. He received them from Monsieur de Talleyrand, with whom he remained until four o'clock in the morning. Colonel Savary, while on his way to Malmaison to report what had taken place, met Réal, the Prefect of Police, whom the Consul had ordered to go and question the prisoner. Réal was much astonished to learn that the prisoner was already dead. Savary found the Consul still more deeply moved than Réal at the news of this sudden execution. He exclaimed, according to Savary, "This was a useless crime," and did not again refer to it.

The drawing-rooms of Paris reechoed with imaginary details about the Consul and Caulaincourt. The latter,

so people said, had brought the Prince to Paris in his own carriage and had treated him in a shameful manner. The Consul was supposed to have ordered the Duke shot with a lantern on his heart and without allowing him to express his last wishes. All these tales were false, and evidently came from Monsieur de Talleyrand, who in order to avoid attracting suspicion to himself spread loathsome details in the hope that the action might seem less important on account of the horrors that accompanied it.

The firmly established rank of Monsieur de Talleyrand's family, as well as his former intimate relation with aristocratic circles, had always given him an immense influence throughout the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Minister during the Republic, Minister during the Consulate, Minister during the Empire, renegade priest who had taken a wife, everything he did was regarded favorably. He obtained full and complete absolution for all his acts. Consequently no one thought of blaming him for the death of the Duc d'Enghien, of which he was one of the principal instigators, whereas Caulaincourt and Savary, who were innocent, were unhesitatingly condemned. My mother repeated to me something the Emperor had said one day when he was angry with Talleyrand: "I find it amusing to see him gaining popularity at my expense. Was it I who knew the Duc d'Enghien? Was it I who wanted to have him executed?"

My knowledge of the Emperor's character convinces me that although the suddenness of the execution took him by surprise he never sought to exonerate himself. Since the weakness he was the least willing to admit was lack of will-power, he would have said: "If I did such a thing it was because I had the right to do so."[34] I might add in support of this opinion these words of his which were repeated to me: "Has any family the right to commit crimes without being punished for them? All the conspirators received a fair trial. I pardoned many of those who sought to kill me, but I could not pardon

all those who sought to betray France by bringing back the conditions which ruined her."

For that matter, it was at this time that all the men who had helped bring about the Revolution rallied about the Consul. "He will never prove a Monk," they declared. "He has proved that. *He* can be trusted." It was later that I learned these various details, whose significance I leave to my readers' judgment. To us the Duc d'Enghien, cut off thus in the bloom of his youth, appeared a pathetic victim of a political situation we did not understand but whose results grieved us bitterly.

All these incidents contributed to bring about an event of great importance. The future fate of France, which the Consul had established on firmer ground, seemed to be linked to his career and to depend on his existence. The only thing lacking to make the future safe was permanent stability. To achieve this, the Empire was established. The Consul was appointed Emperor of the French Republic [May 18, 1804]. A new dynasty was created which consisted only of Joseph, Louis and their children.

Lucien was excluded because he had just married a woman who did not please the Consul and whom he had given his word of honor not to marry. The birth of a son caused him to forget his promise and brave his brother's anger.

In connection with this, Caroline and I received a severe rebuke from my stepfather. It was while the latter was on a trip to Boulogne that Lucien took advantage of the opportunity to get married and to announce the fact to all his family and to my mother. The latter had remained at Saint Cloud and felt she should not take any steps toward receiving Lucien's wife without having been authorized by the Consul to do so.

My husband, on the other hand, declared, "Joseph is the eldest of us all. Whatever he chooses to do I will do also!" Without consulting the Consul, whose violent opposition to the match we nevertheless suspected, the

marriage was publicly admitted. The reason given was that it had already taken place. Lucien came to see us with his wife, who was really remarkably beautiful. I, in my position, could not do otherwise than follow my husband's example. Consequently I did as he wished. But the Consul on his return, having heard that we had acted in this way, reproached both his brothers. What he may have said to the others I cannot tell, but one morning when Caroline and I were with my mother he flew into a temper with us such as I have never seen him in before. He reproved us for having given the name of "sister" to a woman whose reputation was not unblemished. He told us that not only had we failed in the obedience due him as head of the family, but also we had lacked self-respect.

"See what this means!" he exclaimed as he walked about the drawing-room without even looking at us. "I attempt to establish better public morality, and such a woman is accepted as a member of my family. I am the head of a nation to which I am responsible, not only for my own actions but also for those of the people about me whose example may be followed. I will not allow things to occur which give an excuse for imitating the vices rather than the virtues which the masses have a right to expect from those whom they have placed in authority and whom they obey. The people of France are essentially moral. The leaders of France must be the same. The country was ruled too long by nobles who believed they could do as they pleased. Those who are not with me are against me. I have duties to perform and I will perform them. I shall be pitiless."

(Jerome, following Lucien's example, had married without the Consul's permission a young American girl from the United States.[35] My mother intervened on their behalf, but the Consul remained inflexible, saying that those members of his family who did not recognize him as its head ceased to belong to it.) [36]

CHAPTER V

PRINCESS LOUIS (1804-1806)

Establishment of the Empire—The Home-Life of Princess Louis—Some Lunatics—Monsieur de Flahaut—The Birth of Napoleon Louis—The Emperor and Madame Duchatel—Louis' Jealousy—A Visit to the Camp at Boulogne—Royal Marriages—An Innocent Prank.

WAS the Consul right or wrong in establishing the Empire? This is a question which I do not consider myself qualified to discuss. I can only record what I saw myself.

All political parties supported his action. The men who were the most uncompromising in their opinions, namely the republicans, did not blush to give their allegiance to the Empire. Although the determined character of Napoleon might make them feel that their idol Liberty was in danger, at any rate his newly established dynasty was a symbol of that other idol of theirs, Equality. Under the rule of a man who owed his rank entirely to his own abilities, only those who deserved promotion were likely to achieve distinction. Then, too, the rewards which a sovereign can bestow completely won over those who considered such distinctions as they received to be their just due.

The nobility also sought and found a state of security in the shadow of the throne. Their familiarity with court-life and their greater social refinement won for them successes which were important enough to arouse jealousy. Such jealousy was groundless. The Emperor, who wished to end the conditions existing under the Revolution while preserving the good it had accomplished, and at the same time to efface the memory of its excesses, was not in a position to banish the nobility. The

nobles, in spite of their faults, belonged to that class of French citizens who on account of their misfortunes must be protected. Napoleon always maintained the balance between the classes, without restoring to the nobility either their privileges or their influence in public affairs.

As for foreign sovereigns, they looked upon this re-establishment of royal government as a sort of guarantee of stability, since it was in keeping with the prevailing system of government in Europe, a system menaced by democratic theories. Consequently they were prepared for an instant to suspend hostilities toward a country which was no longer internally divided against itself. In short, the only enemies left were England, animated by a spirit of rivalry, a few royalists clinging to their memories of former times, and a few stubborn republicans.

It will be difficult to believe that, important as these new events were in my life, I was so little interested by them. My domestic sorrows increased from day to day. What could I do to make a man happy who did not know the meaning of that word? I still hoped to succeed; my life, my days revolved about this problem; nothing else mattered. Therefore I was very much surprised when one day Caroline came in to see me and for the first time I heard that the Consul was about to be made Emperor.

"People say," she added, "that only Joseph and Louis are mentioned as members of the new dynasty in the decree of the Senate. Can that mean that your children will be princes, heirs to the throne of France, and my children, their cousins, will be nobodies? I will never endure such injustice. I will bring them up to demand their rights, to reconquer them if necessary."

I could not sympathize greatly with Caroline's outburst, since her husband was, after all, only the Consul's brother-in-law, but I realized that such a law would make enemies for my children. The idea worried me. In vain, by way of consolation, did I express my doubts as to the accuracy of the reports. Nothing would quiet

her. Her sister Elisa also shared her opinions and encouraged them. They made such a fuss that their complaints finally reached the ears of the Consul, who one day made the remark: "Really, if you believed my sisters, you would think that I had robbed my family of the heritage of the late King, our father." This epigram [1] was repeated all over Paris, and people found it very witty.

In the meanwhile, the Emperor's sisters were made princesses and had each her *maison d'honneur* similar to mine and that of the Princess Joseph.

One morning when I went to see my mother at Saint Cloud, I found her surrounded by various officials who were paying their respects to her as Empress of France. Then and then only did I discover that Caroline's fears were justified. I cannot yet understand how so important an event made so little impression on me. Doubtless partly because it made slight difference in my social position, which was already so prominent, doubtless too because I was entirely wrapped up in my private troubles. It was necessary, nevertheless, to receive all the officials and the foreign ambassadors who called to present the congratulations of their masters.

The idea that henceforward I should address all the crowned heads of Europe as "cousin" did not flatter my vanity any more than the finding of an appropriate reply to all these compliments worried me. When in some vast drawing-room where all eyes were fixed on me, I felt nervous, but in private receptions I always knew how to banish the shyness of others. I must make one exception to this remark, my rather extraordinary first interview with the Prince-Primate of the Confederation of the Rhine. I was waiting for him in my main reception-room when a fire broke out in another part of the house. My son's room was directly over the place where the fire started. I dashed upstairs and brought him down with me. Meanwhile the blaze had been ex-

tinguished. The Prince arrived, but as I spoke to him I felt all my emotion, all the effort I had made to conceal my alarm from the child's nurse overcome me, and I burst into tears. My guest was extremely astonished. The more he sought to find out the cause for my grief, the less able I became to answer his question. Afterwards we frequently laughed heartily together over his strange reception.

The only change I was conscious of as a result of our new rank was an increased severity on the part of my husband, who made etiquette and propriety excuses for keeping at a distance all our friends and acquaintances. One of the two young Americans, the Tascher boys, who were cousins of my mother, had been sent to a boarding-school. The other, the elder, was taller, kind and gentle, but not particularly intelligent. He had enlisted in the Imperial Guard. No effort was made to prevent him from beginning at the bottom of the ladder. The Emperor was particularly severe in his criticism of members of his own family. He thought that he already had shown favoritism in not putting the boy into one of the regular infantry regiments. The poor lad, forced to go out early in the morning, found it hard that an American, especially a cousin of the Empress of France, should have to begin his career under such painful conditions, which however were slightly improved by his being allowed to come and see us occasionally.

In connection with this, I must mention a characteristic bit of jealousy on the part of my husband. An American wrote me that if he did not immediately obtain twenty-five louis he would drown himself in the Seine. I sent for my cousin to see what was to be done. He was out at the time. That same evening in the presence of my mother and my husband I spoke to my cousin privately in my small drawing-room asking him to look into the matter and deliver the money. As I had forgotten the letter it was agreed that early the next morning my cousin

should stop at our house for it on his way to barracks. This was certainly a very innocent secret, which I would have told my husband had he questioned me, but having heard from other people that Tascher had called the next day before we were awake he forbade the young man to come again to the house.

For some time I was unable to understand why my husband when he got up peered into all the drawing-rooms and closed all the doors before going to his own part of the house. But I soon learned the reason. One day my maid came to me in tears, saying she had been locked in her room, that she was aware my husband was suspicious of her, but an honest woman could not be expected to put up with such treatment. I could not succeed in quieting her; she felt herself to have been more insulted by such suspicions than I was. Soon however she relented and exclaimed, "Ah, madame, don't think that I, who have been with you ever since you came out of boarding-school at Saint-Germain, who know you better than anyone else in the world, am not aware of all you suffer in silence. Your courage has won my respectful admiration. It is only on your account that I stay a day longer in a house where people dare accuse me of misbehavior."

This maid was a woman of good family from Saint-Quentin. Before coming to me she had served only in the household of Mademoiselle d'Orléans. She had not been able to follow the latter abroad, and Madame de Montesson had given her to me when I left Saint-Germain. Her brother was a captain in the Guards with an excellent record. Her words, together with the strange behavior of my husband, made me realize at last that his distrust of me was of a most insulting kind. Never before had I been willing to admit this fact. It grieved me and at the same time hurt my pride. I, who loved virtue passionately, believed that my character was safe from any such suspicions. What means could be employed to regain in my husband's eyes that stainless reputation to

which I attached so much value? I set myself to accomplish this by scrutinizing my most trivial actions for fear they might be misinterpreted. Then, too, I avoided ever finding fault with my husband, ever concealing anything from him, and always attempted to be absolutely loyal and irreproachable in word and deed. Experience was to teach me that all this was fruitless.

To return to the case of my cousin, he was refused admittance to our home. He complained of this to my mother. The latter spoke to the Consul, who made it plain to my husband that it was ridiculous for him to refuse to act as the protector of this young man, who on account of Louis' hostile attitude risked falling in with evil associates. Moreover, my husband gave the public cause for malicious gossip when he thus abandoned a boy he had previously received as a guest.

Louis replied to his brother, "How can you expect me to receive a man who enters my house every morning at seven o'clock before anyone is up?"

Mother repeated this sentence to me, and its malevolence proved to me that he whom Heaven had seemed to make my natural protector was in truth my avowed enemy. I did not imagine that passion could cause one to so deform the truth. Without allowing myself to make the slightest reproach, which I would have considered humiliating to me, I could not restrain myself from telling Louis frankly that, although it might not please him that my cousin should call in the morning, at any rate he could not without endangering my reputation forbid his attending my reception to which all Paris was asked. Louis answered harshly: "Do you want him to come to the house so that I may have the chance of running my sword through his body?" This was the only answer my husband deigned to make. I had to accept being misjudged and slandered.

My mother's uncle, the brother of the two Tascher boys, died in Paris without my being able to attend to any of

his needs. Another American, a cousin of mother's, Madame Sainte-Catherine d'Audiffredi, asked to see me in order that she might recommend her children to me before she died. I hurried to her bedside, but when on my return, still trembling from the sight of her pale distorted countenance, I described to Louis the details of this profoundly affecting scene which I had just witnessed, he replied with a sardonic smile: "You hurried to her with so much eagerness that doubtless there were other less painful objects to be seen there." This remark was an allusion to my cousin, who also stood by the bedside of the dying woman. Such a comment coming at a moment of so sincere and deep an emotion made me judge my husband still more severely.

If my cousin had attracted me, would not my husband's tactics have made me think of him still more often? But such was not the case, and fortunately people in general did not believe in my guilt, showing themselves thereby more fair than my husband was wise. After that I never saw my cousin again. He took part in several campaigns, then returned to Martinique and settled there permanently.

Louis never stopped to consider what his fantastic ways might make people think or say about me. He cared nothing about that. The more gently I tried to accede to his wishes the more exacting and unreasonable he became. One day I stayed late in bed, not being very well. He knew this. About four o'clock in the afternoon I was in my dressing-room, which opened on the antechamber. My husband arrived and found a servant there who a moment before had called to deliver a package but had not been able to come in. The servant said the door was locked. Immediately Louis went upstairs to his room by a private staircase and although he saw me dressing quietly with a maid, he hurried past me and began to search my room, drawing-room and even the garden. The following day the servant was dismissed pitilessly with-

out any grounds being given for this dismissal. Not till long afterwards did I discover that this encounter with a servant outside my door was one of my husband's most serious charges against me.

Speaking to Adèle, who by her marriage had become Madame de Broc, he brought out this incident as a positive piece of evidence in refuting my friend's reproaches that he made me miserable without any good reason for his attitude.

"I found a servant stationed as sentinel outside her door."

"But," replied Adèle, "you went into her room. Did you find anyone there?"

"No, certainly not. The man had escaped by the garden, he was a better runner than I was."

"But why do you believe things you were not able to see? Your wife always shared your apartment, she never tried to impose her own will, she was always accompanied by as strict a woman as Madame de Boubers. What evidence have you against her?"

"Ah, if I had only had proofs do you believe I would have kept her as my wife? But with a woman one never can tell. Aren't there wives who, though they sleep in the same room, in the same bed as their husbands, get up while he is asleep to keep appointments with other men?"

"Stop, stop!" exclaimed Madame de Broc. "I have never read vile books, but if they have corrupted you, you do not deserve a wife like yours."

This conversation, when Adèle repeated it to me long afterwards, explained many things I had never understood. Often I was tempted to think that my husband, although such a thing would have been surprising in a military man, was afraid of robbers, so great was the care with which he scrutinized every corner of our apartment before retiring, so earnestly did he insist on having everything locked up by his valet, who carried off the key with him and did not return till the next morning.

Since the behavior of the upper classes attracts the notice and provokes the comment favorable or otherwise of the rest of the population, it was natural enough that my domestic troubles should arouse the sympathy of some people. That those troubles should have been severely criticized by others, I can also understand. But how was it that out-and-out madmen should be attracted by what they heard of me?

A young Prussian was sent to Paris to secure for a Berlin newspaper the noteworthy productions of our literature. He lived in the rue Saint-Lazare and, doubtless, from his windows often saw me in my garden playing with my son or carrying him about in my arms. This sight aroused his frantic enthusiasm, as though a person's rank could affect the sentiments of a mother toward her child. Instead of writing about literature he wrote constantly about me. He followed me everywhere. Any little act of charity I might happen to perform would be described with such a wealth of detail that his editor was obliged to point out to him that he was not in Paris to write exclusively about *"La Princesse Louis,"* and that unless he resumed his regular news letters he would be dismissed. This warning had no effect. Fearing that the young man's mind had become affected, the editor sent word to his correspondent's parents. Someone came to take him home. He had gone mad.

A certain Chevalier d'Arzac, a former exile, followed me constantly for six years. On all my walks, my visits to the theater or to Malmaison, he shadowed me. One day he stopped the Consul to present a petition asking for the hand of his stepdaughter. Another time, as I was entering my carriage, I turned and instead of my mother discovered this man, whom the servants were holding back by his coat. For a while he was supposed to be a spy. He was merely crazy. When taken to the asylum at Charenton, the doctors declared that his only eccentricities were his belief that I was his wife in the eyes of

the Almighty and his writing to me all the time. He always declared that I could be his bride in Heaven. His family took him back to Lyons. I do not know what became of him.

A Monsieur de Livry had had a picture painted of a woman with her hands folded on her breast; she had unusually large finger-nails.[2] He had sworn never to marry anyone but the woman whose hands had served as model for those in the picture. He sent the picture to my mother to be given to me, since he considered that I resembled his ideal. However, he was not mad enough to ask for that hand although he always sought to obtain a glimpse of it whenever we happened to go to the theater.

Every time people teased me about these follies of which I was said to be the cause I replied that these men paid attention to me simply because they were insane. And this was true. Fortunately my husband did not, oddly enough, bother about these episodes, which were known to everyone in Paris.

But I should find it difficult to describe my mental anguish, which increased from day to day. The idea that my husband did not respect me, a woman to whom respect had always been such a necessity, sometimes drove me to despair, but this feeling gave way to a determination to win back what I felt to be my just deserts. I did not know then that passion can neither foresee the future nor remedy the past. Moreover, although I was unhappy, never smiling and stifling the complaints which rose to my lips, yet, as I had nothing to conceal and was always calm, I was still spared the severest trial of all, the moment when one has to struggle not only against others but also against oneself. Fate still held that supreme trial in reserve for me.

Since my marriage, whenever a young man appeared who was pleasing in looks or manner, the fear that I might be attracted to him, even for an instant, put me at once on my guard. At dances I was popular and frequently to such a degree as to make it embarrassing. People

would stand on chairs in order to watch me dance. I enjoyed dancing so much in itself that I could not help being annoyed by this attention. One evening, a Monsieur de Flahaut,[3] a young man of my own age, who was agreeable and rather impulsive, did not restrain his enthusiasm and burst into applause. I was nettled by this action. This noisy mark of approval seemed to me to be in bad taste. I stepped up to his mother and asked her to tell her son that I danced for my own amusement and not to win the applause of others.

The next day they both called to apologize. Madame de Flahaut was a clever woman. My mother had been instrumental in having her name removed from the list of royalists debarred from reentering France, and she was much attached to us. Her son had joined the army when he was fifteen. My husband had placed him in his regiment and protected him.[4] Later, Murat chose him as aide-de-camp. He was received in our family circle without ceremony, and his frivolous disposition, in spite of his mental gifts and good looks, had made me consider him merely as an agreeable guest and not at all a dangerous one. He frequently came to see my husband and felt obliged to pay his respects to me before leaving the house.

As I was generally busy in the morning I often declined to receive him unless I happened to be taking my singing lesson. As we had the same teacher we were able to sing duets. One day, when he was announced and I thought he was still in the anteroom, I answered rather sharply, "Tell him I'm not at home." He was just behind the servant and overheard me. I was embarrassed and tried to excuse myself but could not help noticing his downcast expression. One always feels more guilty when one causes a moment's unhappiness to a person who is generally gay. Suddenly Monsieur de Flahaut ceased to appear at our house. I thought this was due to my discourtesy. As he did not attract me (*that* I was quite sure

of) I did not hesitate to look him up in order to destroy the unfavorable impression he might have formed of me. I met him at Caroline's and there I reproached him politely for not coming to see us. He replied assuring me that he had called frequently but never found me in. I considered this simply an excuse and in order to convince myself of the fact I asked our doorman for the list of visitors who had left their names. Sure enough Monsieur de Flahaut's name did appear frequently. I could not understand what this meant. A mystery haunts one's mind till it has been solved. I wanted an explanation and finally discovered that my husband without saying a word to me had given orders that the young man was not to be admitted. Louis' jealousy in this instance appeared stranger to me than ever. I thought to myself, "Why should he worry about a young man who does not please me at all, whom I consider fickle, to whom I even behave rudely? But the young man will think me insincere or perhaps coquettish, for I invite him to call and yet refuse him admittance."

It is disagreeable to give people a wrong impression of yourself. That was my reason for continuing to think of this incident.

At last, one night at a dance while supper was being served Monsieur de Flahaut complained to me that he had been turned away from my door while other visitors were being admitted. He might have been spared this mortification in view of the long-standing attachment which existed between our two families. I was touched and embarrassed. I tried to console him saying, "It was not my fault, but I beg of you do not call again." Instantly I realized the mistake I had made, for with a glance that surprised me he exclaimed that he was delighted to learn that it was not I who had refused him admission, and he added with remarkable tactfulness:

"You will never see me again, for the idea that an action of mine should cause you inconvenience would be more than I could bear."

The impression his words produced on me may be left to the imagination. Here was a man who was aware of my husband's jealousy. I had made the mistake of revealing it to him. On the other hand, a young madcap, to whom I ought to pay no attention, showed that he sympathized with me sufficiently to promise to avoid me, to respect my peace of mind. This was love as I understood the meaning of the word. I was overcome with surprise at being, for the first time in my life, dissatisfied with my own conduct and at finding in a young man of the world a heart whose purity of sentiment was equal to my lofty standards. In spite of my efforts my thoughts kept returning often to Monsieur de Flahaut.

My brother asked us to a dinner at his country place called La Jonchère. The party was a large one. Among the guests was a young Polish countess who was leaving France the next day. Her sadness was apparent to all observers; she loved Monsieur de Flahaut[5] and was about to bid him farewell. She seemed overcome with grief. He too had tears in his eyes and could not conceal his feelings. I was touched by the sight.

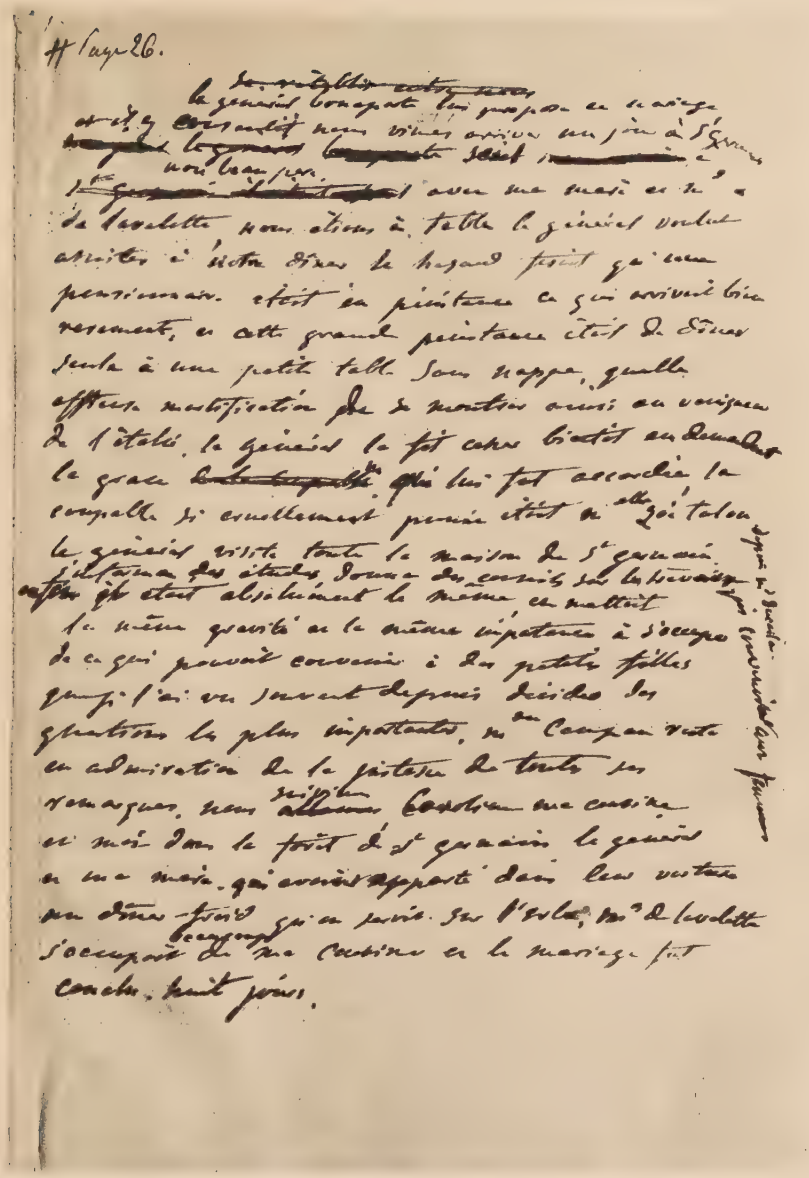
I said to myself, "He is indeed capable of loving someone. He is suffering; he interests me. I made a mistake when I judged him superficial. He has shown his friendship toward me and he shall have mine; he deserves it and I can give it the more readily since, being in love with another woman, he is harmless to me."

During one of the trips of the Emperor to Boulogne,[6] Caroline came to see me about sending him good wishes for his birthday. Since my letter at the time of his marriage I had never written to him, and together we composed two letters practically alike. The answer to Caroline was merely dictated to a secretary and signed by the Emperor. The answer to me was charming and entirely in the Emperor's own handwriting. Caroline, vexed at the difference, complained of being slighted. She did not actually declare it was my fault, but quite naturally a little jealousy was mixed with her annoyance.

My mother went to take the waters at Aix-la-Chapelle. The Emperor was to join her there after his trip to Boulogne, and they were to visit Belgium and the Rhineland. At Aix-la-Chapelle mother made herself as popular as she did everywhere she went. On his arrival, the Emperor was received with great enthusiasm. People were grateful to him for having brought back the relics which since the days of Charlemagne had formed the glory of the city. The canons of the cathedral and the municipal authorities felt that the way they could best show their gratitude to the man whom they looked upon as a new Charlemagne was to present him with an object which had belonged to his great predecessor. They selected a charm which Charlemagne always wore when going into battle and which had been found still attached to his collar when his tomb was opened in the year . . .[7]

My mother requested that in addition to the charm they add a bit of the bone from Charlemagne's arm which was preserved in a shrine, a little statue of the Virgin supposed to have been carved by Saint Luke and a bit of the four great relics (a linen robe of the Virgin, the swaddling clothes of the infant Christ, the cloth that had enveloped Christ on the Cross and the handkerchief in which had been wrapped the head of John the Baptist). I still have all these objects.

During their stay in Belgium, the Emperor and the Empress received the visits of all the princes and princesses of the small German states who wished to attach themselves to the destinies of the French government. They felt that the title of Emperor conferred more stability on the ruler of the French nation. They also found it more natural, more in keeping with their traditions, to pay homage to an Emperor, to be dependent on him, to look towards him for defense, to entrust their interests to a sovereign bearing that title rather than to a ruler holding office for a limited period of years, a successor to those various governments which had followed



FACSIMILE PAGE OF MANUSCRIPT FROM
THE MEMOIRS OF QUEEN HORTENSE
In the Collection of Prince Napoleon

one another so rapidly and whose authority was equally precarious.

The Emperor met these princes at Mayence, reviewed their troops and held maneuvers of his own forces, which were under the command of Eugène. The public surmised, therefore, that an alliance was about to take place between my brother and one of those ruling royal families of Germany who had hastened to present their respects to the Emperor all the more eagerly as the power of the Empire increased, even in the eyes of its enemies.

At this time my husband went to Plombières for his health and from there to Turin to preside over the deliberations of the electoral college. As I was about to have my second child, I could not accompany him and remained in Paris.

My life would have been calm enough had it not been disturbed by that emotion which was already beginning to agitate my mind and heart. I did not by any means realize what was the matter. When people spoke to me I sought to bring up the subject of the feelings of those who are in love; I trembled at the thought that I might experience those feelings, which I dreaded, and if the person I was talking with described love as a state of passion and frenzy, I breathed more freely, saying to myself, "What a relief, then I cannot be in love."

I went daily to the Bois de Boulogne accompanied by Madame de Boubers, my son and, frequently, by Monsieur Lavallette. Monsieur de Flahaut rode there regularly. Sometimes, we would even take walks with him. I no longer asked him to the house, but he always managed to be where I was and never missed an opportunity of declaring his sentiments toward me. When he did so my poor opinion of him revived. I believed it was not possible to love more than once. He seemed to treat too lightly that young Polish woman whose grief had touched me, and this idea put me on my guard with him. If he spoke to me of her with respect and emotion I would weaken

and would treat him kindly; if, however, his conversation was about his affection for me, which he declared was of long standing and which his liaison with the Polish woman had not been able to destroy, I would repulse his advances. At such times I would again consider him as one of those fickle men who only seek to please women and obtain their favors.

I saw Monsieur de Flahaut almost every day. The moment I caught sight of his gray horse in the distance my heart began to beat. And yet I declined to admit I was in love. When he asked me where I should be on the morrow, I answered I had no idea. Any other reply would have seemed to me too much like giving him an appointment. In spite of this I saw him everywhere I went.

Princess Caroline had a handsome estate at Neuilly. She often invited me there. There were boating parties and dances in the evening. One day, apparently much distressed, she said to me, "Just see what a gloomy mood that young Monsieur de Flahaut is in. I have tried to get him to dance, and he declines obstinately to do so. I wish you would try and see if you can't persuade him."

I called Monsieur de Flahaut over to me. He informed me how, that morning at lunch, in front of the servants, Caroline had teased him about his assiduous presence wherever I happened to be. He had answered sharply, but the thought that such remarks might hurt my reputation and expose me to malicious gossip was profoundly disagreeable to him. I was touched by his concern. I told him to go and dance, and he obeyed me. Caroline, who wished to see whether I had more influence than she over a young man attached to her household—Monsieur de Flahaut was at that time one of General Murat's aides-de-camp—was convinced by his actions that a single word from me carried more weight with him than all her entreaties during an entire evening. From then on, she neglected no means for regaining an influence

she should never have lost. She appeared to sympathize with him, sought to cure him of an attachment which could only result in making him unhappy. She described me as a person who was kind and gentle but too aloof ever to be moved by any tender sentiment. She told him I was sufficiently vain to wish to have numerous admirers in attendance whom I soon tired of and, moreover, that I was tortured to such an extent by my husband's jealousy it was a sin for anyone to think of adding to my troubles. Never had a word from me allowed Monsieur de Flahaut to think I was the least interested in him. But the eagerness that was shown to cure him of his infatuation was so great that for a time he avoided me and disappeared entirely from sight. I was at first surprised at this. But my feelings of surprise soon changed to consternation when for the first time to my knowledge I became aware of what emotions were agitating my heart. This discovery terrified me. The intensity of my feelings, the manner in which they dominated my thoughts, seemed proof to me that they could not be wholly evil. Yet it was essential I stifle them. I summoned up all my willpower to do so.

Adèle returned just at this time from a short trip to Switzerland with her sister. I threw myself into her arms, burst into tears and told her my troubles. She sympathized with me. It was agreed between us that we should seek to discover all the possible flaws and defects in the character of this man whom I ought never to have noticed. Taking as an excuse a new song he was sending me, Monsieur de Flahaut wrote me a letter full of delicacy of feeling and expression. I did not reply but tore it up after having shown it to Adèle. As the letter seemed to us excellently written, we decided, in accordance with our plan, that it was not composed by him but by his mother. Only a woman could have expressed herself in such a manner. Presumably I was considered to be like the heroine of some novel whom it was easy to

lead astray. But all these criticisms were in vain. I was suffering. My heart was heavy. I prayed fervently. I was wounded, but I hoped to be cured. I sought to understand my feelings in order to combat them, to find a remedy as powerful as the disease. One day I felt I was on the road to recovery. I had not been at Neuilly for a long time. I went there. Caroline was on the island. I waited in the moonlight for her to come back. She returned with her arm in that of Monsieur de Flahaut. This sight caused all my blood to rush to my heart. She too appeared so confused at seeing me that I was astonished at her emotion. As for Monsieur de Flahaut, the more anxious he seemed to speak to me the more I avoided him. But the difficulty I felt in doing so, the intensity of my emotion was so great as to make me realize the truth. *I was in love.* This knowledge completed my despair.

When I left Neuilly I was greatly upset. On returning home instead of retiring to rest I gave way to my gloomy thoughts. I regretted that my husband was not at hand, that he had not returned as I had asked him to when I first felt myself in danger. I would have confided my problem to him, I had made up my mind to do so. Louis loved me, or at any rate he declared he did. He would understand my grief, he would help me overcome the tenderness which I felt toward Monsieur de Flahaut and aid me to escape the peril to which I was exposed. I was absorbed in these thoughts when, suddenly, a man entered my room. I uttered a cry; I felt as though I were about to faint. It was my husband.[8]

"Oh, how you have frightened me!" was all I could say.

I do not understand how it happened that the sight of a man appearing suddenly at night when I was alone in my apartment did not seriously affect my health, and hasten the birth of my child. I had no reason to expect to see him, for he was to have stayed some time longer in Turin. As a matter of fact, the day of his departure

he had invited all the authorities to dine with him. In spite of this, for no known reason, he left the city, asking his aide-de-camp to act as host in his stead. He traveled day and night, left his carriage at the corner of the boulevard, dismissed his escort and entered his own home stealthily on foot. Everyone was asleep. I was the only person awake. A maid was in the room next to mine. He would not let her warn me of his arrival. Without the slightest regard for my state of health, the fact that a sudden fright might result in a miscarriage, he exposed me to all these possible dangers for the sake of taking me by surprise.

The excessive suspicion which this conduct betrayed stifled the confidence of a heart that, an instant before, had been longing for an understanding soul to which it might confide its troubles. I was unable to hide altogether the unpleasant impression such a home-coming made on me. Yet I had longed for my husband's return. I had counted on it to protect me from the dangers that threatened me. Louis was surprised to find that I had not yet gone to bed. I told him of my visit to Neuilly, of the sadness which had come over me, of my desire to go to the country, and begged him to take me there immediately. How easy it would have been for him to have discovered my secret!

Before his departure Louis had bought the two châteaux of Saint-Leu. One had belonged to the Duc d'Orléans, who had disposed of it at the time of the Revolution. The other and older one had belonged to a former *juge des fêtes forains de Joinville.* The manor-house on this second estate had been torn down, and the parks of the two domains thrown into one. The deep streams that flowed through these estates made them one of the loveliest spots in France. It was there we went to spend the last weeks before the date on which my child was to be born.

The beauties of nature have always produced an ex-

traordinary effect on me. I did not recover my lost happiness at Saint-Leu, but at least the surroundings quieted my nerves. Pleased with myself for having had the strength of mind to leave Paris, I enjoyed to the utmost this smiling countryside and the enchanting scenery. All nature reminded me that I still loved, but it likewise convinced me that it was possible to conquer this fatal inclination, for I had been able to escape from its toils at a moment when I felt them closing in on me.

When I was on the point of leaving for Saint-Leu, I received a letter from Monsieur de Flahaut. In order to write me he signed his mother's name. He appeared deeply grieved at my departure. He awaited a line from me and in return was prepared to offer to place his life at my feet. I made no reply and stepped into my carriage.

Caroline came to see me. Her sole topic of conversation was the joy of loving and being loved. Her affection for her husband, which once had been so violent, seemed to have diminished. She now was attracted by the charms of a pure liaison. Thus it was easy to guess what was going on in her mind. Can a hurt vanity transform itself into love? Is such a metamorphosis possible?

The moment I recognized in her a fellow victim, I sympathized with her. "Perhaps," I said to myself, "she does not feel herself guilty to be in love. In that case she can be happier than I. I must not regret having overcome a passion which would make both me and another wretched."

My mother came back with the Emperor from Belgium. We returned to Paris and occupied a new mansion in the rue Cerutti [9] for, since my husband's appointment as constable of France, we could no longer live in our little house in the rue de la Victoire. During our stay at Saint-Leu Louis had rearranged my apartment. The height of the walls between our house and those of the neighbor's had been increased; a sentry-box had been

placed in the garden close to my window. My maid could no longer enter my apartment except through the drawing-room. This latter innovation aroused so much mirth among our servants that my husband was obliged to have the door replaced that connected my room with the servants' quarters. I made no comment whatever on these changes. His wishes were my wishes. Indeed I felt that now the more he shut me in behind locks and bars, the greater service he was doing me. Of course it never occurred to me to forget my duties as a wife to the extent of receiving a man in my private apartment, but the more obstacles I saw about me the better I was pleased.

My attendants, who were appointed by the Emperor, consisted of Madame de Viry, the lady in waiting, Madame de Villeneuve, Madame de Léry, Madame de Seyssel, Madame Mollien. I kept a post for Adèle Auguié. Madame de Boubers was governess for my children, Madame de Boucheporn and Madame de Mornay were undergovernesses. I had Monsieur Turgot as equerry and Abbé Bertrand as chaplain; the latter had formerly been our teacher at Saint-Germain. Monsieur d'Osmond, Bishop of Nancy, was our almoner and the principal officers attached to my husband were General Noguès, Monsieur de Caulaincourt, Monsieur de Broc, Monsieur d'Arjuzon, Monsieur de Villeneuve. He appointed a certain Monsieur de Sénégra his steward. The latter was supposed to enjoy his confidence, probably because he humored my husband's whims. De Sénégra's duties included keeping a strict watch over everything that took place in the house, and in no country in Europe was the detective service as well organized as in my home. This man was afraid of me. It must have been because he was frequently told to spy on my behavior. The result was he did not dare look at me although I treated him exactly as I did everybody else. The other aides-de-camp had nothing remarkable about them except their physical unattractiveness. My stay at Saint-Leu gave me the oppor-

tunity of becoming acquainted with all these gentlemen, none of whom ever set foot in my apartments. I was served entirely by my ladies in waiting. My equerry appeared only on ceremonial occasions.

On October 11, 1804, a few days after my arrival in Paris, I gave birth to a second son.[10] In accordance with the established custom, the High Chancellor Cambacérès and all the other officials remained in the drawing-room next to my bedchamber. My mother had hastened up from Saint Cloud at the first symptoms and did not leave me for an instant. My husband, I must confess, also took care of me with the greatest solicitude. Under such circumstances as these his character seemed to undergo a change, but once the danger was over he once again became morose and suspicious.

Public rejoicings and profuse gifts to hospitals marked the birth of a second heir to the throne, for, both the Emperor and his brother Joseph being childless, my sons were destined to succeed them. When my child was to be christened his father wrote in the baptismal register "Louis," which was the name he wished his son to bear. The Emperor with his own hand struck this out, insisting that all the children in his family must be called "Napoleon" and that this name should come first.[11] My husband, who had been obliged to submit, kept telling me over and over again while I was ill with milk-fever about this usurpation of authority and the unreasonable demands of his brother who wished everything to be subordinated to his will. Previously, when my first child was christened, my husband had wished to name him Charles instead of Napoleon. These minor vexations made him colder in his attitude toward me. As I did not share his annoyance over what seemed to me to be matters of little importance he was inclined to hold me responsible for them, and this feeling made him the bitterer towards me.

If peace of mind is at all times a precious possession

it becomes doubly so in the case of a poor woman lying groaning on a bed of pain, hardly recovered from the agonies which nature has inflicted on her. On such occasions a woman longs for quiet, rest and the sympathetic care of all those who are about her. It seems as if Providence has designed these grievous trials for her in order that she may the better appreciate the joys of tender and loving care. Her weakness is so great, her sensitiveness so acute that she is unable to call upon her reason to dispel unpleasant impressions. She becomes a child again, weeping at the slightest reproach, welcoming the most fugitive sign of kindness, but unable to bear any kind of moral shock. If at such times a misfortune falls upon her, it crushes her to earth and leaves marks which time cannot efface. This was my condition at the moment of which I am now writing. My physical health, which had up to then withstood the moral strain, began to give way.

My nurse, an old woman who nevertheless was extremely attentive to my needs, had frequently while she was sitting at night by my bedside heard someone come and listen outside my door. She had attempted to discover who it was but had not succeeded. In telling of this incident, she thought she was merely accusing my servants of indiscreet curiosity. What she really did was to inform me that Louis dared still to be suspicious of me. For who else would have come by night to my door? This uneasiness he could not overcome finally caused him to have a bed put in my room. All my attendants were deeply touched. My poor nurse also said with tears in her eyes: "What a devoted husband he is! He wants to be his wife's nurse himself. Ah, how excellent a husband the Princess has!"

I made no reply, but what were my feelings when I discovered that this action was due to a distrust that was as acute as it was indiscreet.

At nine o'clock I was supposed to go to sleep. Louis did not return from the theater till eleven. In the morn-

ing his valet woke him up at seven. My own sleep was disturbed each time and each time I said to myself, "It is suspicion, not sympathy, that inflicts this on me and watches at my bedside." Evenings when he did not go out, my husband played chess with Monsieur Lavallette or Monsieur Mollien. I, who was just beginning to be able to get up, sat beside them, reading or drawing in spite of the weakness of my eyesight.

One day, in the presence of the two other men, my husband looked at me and said, "Women all have the same motto—'Short and sweet.'" Overcome with indignation I rose and hurried to my room. Louis noticed my attitude and followed me.

"Ah," I exclaimed, "I do not know whether my life will be short, but certainly no one could say that it has been sweet."

This was the first complaint that I had ever dared utter. My husband began to laugh. He assured me that such a compliment was not intended for me and that I was mistaken in applying it to myself. On the other hand, all his actions betrayed the fact that this was his real opinion.

My fine natural constitution plus my youth saved me from those ills that almost invariably accompany a confinement which takes place under such conditions, but nervous troubles appeared about this time. I was no longer willing to nurse my child as I was sure that after these various emotions my milk would be unsatisfactory. It became necessary to relieve me of my milk, and this affected my head and my nerves. Sometimes I would come out of a long contemplation, alarmed at the fact that my mind had been completely empty. These fits of absence proved all too clearly how weak I still was. At such times I would send for my little ones; I would look at them and convince myself that they still had need of their mother's care. I prayed that my courage might return and believed my prayer was answered.

One day the wife of Marshal Lannes brought me her

children. They were full of health and energy. I asked the doctor why mine were so pale. He replied: "These children are on a regular diet. Your son dines with his father, eats anything he wants to and consequently his health suffers."

My husband came in. I repeated gently to him what the doctor had said, but he replied in a rage, "You never want me to have a chance to see my boy." And he left the room, slamming the door so violently that my bed shook. The nurse brought me my dinner. I tried to hide my emotion. I took a spoonful of soup, but could not swallow it and swooned away. I only mention this incident because it had serious effects on my general health. For months I was unable to eat anything. The moment I sat down at meals the very sight of food made me faint. My only nourishment for a long while was a little dry bread with a little claret. The doctor could not understand my pulse at all. Doctor Corvisart said to me one day:

"You are seriously ill and I do not know in the least what is the matter. If you have any secret sorrow, confide it to me. Doctors are like father confessors; they must be told everything. Otherwise, they are liable to prescribe remedies that will prove mortal poisons."

I answered that nothing was the matter and as I spoke I burst into tears. The doctor made no further inquiries and afterwards never made out another prescription although he disapproved my conduct for the ten years that followed.

My husband's severity toward me continued to increase. He had forbidden me to go anywhere, even to see my mother, without him. Six months had passed since my confinement and I was still unable to eat without fainting. Once my *accoucheur* came in before I had recovered my senses. He believed my nerves were responsible for my fainting fits and gave orders that I was to be taken out in the fresh air immediately.

Madame de Boubers accompanied me to the Bois de Boulogne where I met the Princess Caroline with her children and their governess. I entered my carriage. On his return home, my husband had not found me in the house. He did not know what had taken place, took a carriage and followed my footsteps. Unable to find me in the Bois de Boulogne he became still more upset. Finally he met me with the escort I have just described, but he never forgave me for having gone out without notifying him. This is another of his most serious charges against me. Perhaps my gentleness increased his irritation. That idea has frequently occurred to me since, but at the time I believed that it was this very gentleness which would cure him. Moreover, as I felt myself guilty of an affection that I was unable to stifle, I was the more ready to submit to his lack of equity.

The question of a divorce between my mother and the Emperor came up again about this time. A family council was called. The Emperor's brothers displayed such relentless animosity on this occasion that Napoleon believed they were treating a matter of public interest as if it were a private feud. As a result, instead of heeding their advice, he made plans not only to make my mother Empress, but to have her crowned at his own coronation.

The Pope came to France to perform this ceremony and it became the outstanding event of the day. People talked about nothing else. My husband went to Fontainebleau in order to be present at the interview between the Emperor and the Pope.[12] While in Paris, his Holiness was lodged in the Pavillon de Flore [a corner of the Louvre near the Pont Royal]. I called on him, accompanied by my husband and my son. The sight of this venerable figure, head of the religion which teaches the beauties of suffering and forgiveness, moved me deeply. I believe had my husband not been with me I should have fallen on my knees, imploring his Holiness to give me courage, just as though such a thing were in his power.

The Pope was everywhere sought after and treated with the greatest respect. He could see that the French Revolution had not been able to destroy here a religion which the now established liberty of conscience rendered still more inviolable. Every day in the galleries of the Louvre [13] an immense throng of people assembled to receive his blessing. Only one young man arrogantly refused to kneel as his Holiness passed. The Pope stopped and said to him very gently, "An old man's blessing never does any harm." Touched by his remark, the young man knelt in humble reverence. Thus the gentlest religion can conquer human hearts.

On December 2, 1804,[14] we went in state to the Tuileries and from there in a great procession to Notre Dame. The huge crowd of people who had gathered to watch us pass, the customary cheering, the presence of the head of the Church, who had traveled so far to attend the ceremony, the Italian cardinals, the army which had won so many victories, the presidents representing their different provinces, the foreign princes, the brilliant court officials, all contributed to make the spectacle one of the most imposing that can be imagined. My mother's grace and dignity won the admiration of all those present. There had been violent discussions as to who was to carry the Empress's train. The Emperor's sisters had refused to do so, but were forced to obey or else not appear at all at the ceremony. The Princess Joseph and I were the only ones to play our parts willingly. As she entered the church, my mother mislaid the ring given her by the Pope which he was to bless. His superstitious nature might have seen in this incident a sign of coming misfortune. My brother found the ring afterwards and gave it to me. It is still in my possession.

A few days afterwards,[15] the Emperor distributed his symbolic eagles to the troops on the Champ de Mars. At a cabinet meeting the question had been discussed whether it would not be advisable to change the national colors,

do away with the tricolor which had aroused so much discord throughout France and which had been identified with so many crimes. But innumerable victories had since then made it a national rather than a party emblem, and the Emperor was the first to admit that it had been the symbol of France's regeneration and consequently should accompany his eagles in order that they might be feared abroad and honored at home.

The different ceremonies followed one another so rapidly that we did not have a moment to ourselves. In the morning a number of Frenchmen and foreigners were brought to us to be introduced. My husband as Constable of France had daily as his guests a number of generals and colonels. We also invited all the presidents of the French cantons. By a strange chance, a balloon that had gone astray during one of the fêtes fell near Rome and brought to that city the news of the coronation twenty-four hours after it had taken place.

My eldest child had been baptized by Cardinal Caprara. The Emperor wished to have the one who had just been born baptized by the Pope. The ceremony took place at Saint Cloud.[16] It was the first time the Pope had ever performed this rite. Consequently the greatest pomp accompanied it. My son cried a great deal. That was the only thing I noticed. Such a mark of the Emperor's favor vexed Caroline keenly. She had just given birth to a daughter and had hoped to have the child baptized at the same time as mine. I should have been glad to have this done on her account. The Emperor would not hear of it, and naturally she was rather jealous of me.

These festivities, which the Emperor was obliged to attend, had taken his mind a little off his work. At least he seemed more willing to appear in society and to enjoy it. He had become courtly in his manners, and spoke more frequently to the ladies, but only in order that he might the more easily converse with one of them who appeared to interest him extremely.

Madame Duchatel was about the average height with a good figure. Her features were animated and intelligent, her eyes large and deep blue with a charming expression. She had a rather long and very pointed nose, a large mouth revealing the most beautiful teeth in the world, a complexion that was dull in the daytime but dazzling in the evening. Such was the woman who disturbed my mother's peace of mind. Madame Duchatel had just been appointed lady in waiting at the palace. When she was at a ball Prince Murat never left her side, but his wife did not seem disturbed. My brother told me one day that the Emperor was in love with this lady. Duroc had mentioned to him that my stepfather was not attending to affairs of state as assiduously as he had done previously, but talked about her all the time. He added that Murat's constant attendance on her was not in his own behalf. We all of us feared the Empress might notice what was going on. Had she done so, it would have wounded her cruelly. We all swore to help one another keep her in ignorance of it.

The wife of Marshal Ney, who had always been a close friend of mine, was on duty as lady in waiting at the palace with Madame Duchatel. She had noticed to whom the Emperor addressed most of his remarks, and to whom he was most attentive. My mother began to show an irritation which my friend feared would vent itself on her. I begged her, if the Empress accused her unjustly, not to undeceive her, because it would be easy subsequently to prove her own innocence, whereas if my mother's suspicions were directed in the right quarter, she could no longer be in doubt and therefore would be unhappy.

On account of her affection for me, my friend agreed to this, but always remained prepared to justify herself and declare the truth. My mother was conscious that someone was depriving her of her husband's tenderness. She became the prey of the gloomiest thoughts and became so profoundly sad that I no longer knew what to do to con-

sole her. I confided to Louis the reasons of her grief and asked him, at the same time, on that account to allow me to visit my mother more frequently. He acceded to my request but only after making many objections. I frequently was a witness of painful scenes between my mother and the Emperor. His wife's reproaches wearied Napoleon. He lost his temper. She did not attempt to hide her sorrow from her attendants, who consoled her and hastened to spread abroad the reason for her tears. The Emperor appeared as a dangerous, immoral man. When these reports came back to him he again became angry.

In the meantime my mother's grief, which was affecting her health, brought me to the point of speaking to Prince Murat.

"You care for the Emperor," I said to him, "therefore you ought to be careful of his family life. Instead of that, you are perhaps to blame for the fact that he and his wife are no longer on good terms. By repeating the remarks you hear made by people about the palace you irritate him. His nervousness leads to renewed quarrels. This union, which till now has been so tender and close, is being broken up."

Murat defended his conduct awkwardly. His only reply was that his devotion to the Emperor was boundless. The next day while they were out hunting he repeated our conversation to my stepfather, probably changing it to create the impression he wished.

A reception was held at the palace that same evening. The Emperor came in, looked at me sternly, pretended to speak to the two ladies who were beside me, and passed me by without a word or even a nod. At the end of the evening he could no longer contain himself. Whenever he was angry with someone, he was unable to conceal it. He called me to him, and the following conversation took place, the people who were near us retiring to a distance to wait for it to be over:

"So you too, madame, are against me?"

"I, your Majesty? I could never be against you."

"Oh, it is easy enough to understand. It is your mother's doing."

"I cannot help thinking of and wishing for your mutual happiness."

"But you complain of the way I treat her."

"Your Majesty, my remarks have not been repeated correctly. You are free to act as you choose, but these scenes I witness between you and my mother make you both wretched. Those who provoke them do so in order to make themselves seem important. They are not sincerely fond of either of you."

"Why should I not have friends that tell me the truth?"

"Real friends do not try to increase friction between a married couple."

"But your mother's jealousy makes me look ridiculous to onlookers. All sorts of stupid remarks are made about me. Don't you think I know about them? She is to blame."

"No, your Majesty, those whom I am complaining about are to be blamed for it. If they tried to calm you instead of arousing your anger, you would be more considerate of my mother's feelings. How can you expect her to have more self-control than you have yourself? She suffers and she complains. That is natural enough. If those whom you consider your friends did not repeat her complaints to you, or if you were able to control yourself enough not to show her your displeasure, I am sure you would again be happy together. But, I repeat, do not expect more patience from her than you have yourself."

"You are right," said the Emperor, suddenly becoming more gentle. "I realize that though I may be great in great things, I am petty in small ones."

With these words he left me.

Several days later he spoke about me in the presence of several persons. One of his remarks was so flattering

I feel I must record it. This was the sentence as it was repeated to me:

"Hortense reasons so clearly that one would think she is not influenced by her emotions. But when you know her well, you realize that her emotions are what make her reason so well."

On another occasion, speaking to me of my married life, he said laughingly, "Louis would have been happier with the Empress. One would have guarded the window while the other guarded the door." Becoming serious, he added, "I know how irreproachable your conduct is, and I assure you you are not only one of the women but one of the persons I admire the most." Such a remark coming from a man who was chary of his praise frequently consoled me for the injustice of others. Since then I have remembered it with pride, and that memory has helped me bear the censure of which I received so large a measure.

Although not so uncomfortable as mine, the Empress's married life was far from being a happy one. My mother began to discover who was occupying her husband's mind. In a short time no doubt remained possible. One evening at Malmaison she had complained of the Emperor's mood to the two ladies in attendance, who were Madame Ney and Madame Duchatel. The following morning she said, looking at them severely, "Ladies, it is most surprising that the Emperor repeated to me this morning a remark I made only to you last night." Madame Duchatel's color changed, and no doubt was left in my mother's mind. Her grief was so violent that she succeeded in persuading the Emperor to break off his liaison. The effort was nevertheless a painful one, for Duroc told my brother and me how strong an influence this love-affair had on the Emperor.

He was used to seeing everything bow before his will. Consequently resistance increased his desire, but he had too much self-control to allow himself to be dominated by

his feelings. Then, also, he was too severe in his judgment of the private life of others to admit publicly that he was entangled in a liaison; and he did not hesitate to put a stop to an affair which was already causing him inconvenience. In order to be able to see Madame Duchatel and not arouse the suspicions of her husband, the Emperor for several evenings went out on foot alone with Duroc. Once he was taking a walk with her at Villiers, the estate belonging to the Murats, when they heard a noise. Afraid of being discovered, the Emperor leaped over a high wall at the risk of hurting himself. Duroc, not so excited, did not dare to imitate him. Constantly terrified to see him exposing himself in this way, Duroc was delighted when the liaison came to an end.

I heard through Caroline that the Emperor sent Madame Duchatel his portrait set in magnificent diamonds. She kept the portrait but returned the diamonds as she considered such a gift an insult. Caroline also told me that she had once been asked by the Emperor, when Madame Duchatel was ill, to obtain the letters he had written her. They were supposed to be extremely tender. Madame Duchatel was never willing to return them. I do not know whether they are still in her possession.

People talked a great deal about the masked ball at the Opera.

"What," said the Emperor, "your husband has never taken you in a box to watch one of these spectacles? He really is too severe. You must go some night with your mother."

One evening after a large reception, the Empress, whom I was in the habit of taking back to her apartment, invited me to accompany her to one of these balls. I should have liked to have had my husband's permission. Although he hardly had spoken to me for a long time I felt that for the first time he might now have reason to complain of my conduct. I was unable to reach him as he had already left the palace. The Duc de Vicence and

Monsieur de Bausset had been appointed to accompany us. I kept beside Madame de Boubers. The sight of the masks amused me, but as no one accosted me, I was unable to understand why people found these balls so amusing. After we had twice walked around the ballroom a man in a mask stopped us and wished us to go with him.

"What," he exclaimed, "you indulge in an amusement which you so rarely have an opportunity to enjoy and you do not know how to make the most of the occasion? You are nothing but a little fool."

The man with the mask frightened me. We returned to the Tuileries. My mother was much worried to find that the Emperor was not there. A moment later he appeared wearing a domino and informed us that it was he in disguise who had amused himself by frightening us, but that our hasty return had spoiled his plans. When I reached home I at once told my husband everything that had occurred, but Louis made no comment of any kind. He no longer showed his disapproval of my conduct by reproaches as he had done when we were newly married. Now he indicated it by a chilling silence.

A few months before the Emperor's departure for Italy a page came one morning to say that he wished to see us. When we arrived he announced that he insisted we obey him. His plans made it imperative that he adopt our eldest son, whom he would crown King of Italy.[17] My husband replied that he would never consent to his son's holding a rank higher than his own. The Emperor at first stormed, then became quieter. He wished to make my husband understand that the child would remain in France until he came of age; that he would have two establishments, one French, the other Italian; that, moreover, it was the only means of avoiding war with Austria and keeping Italy. But my husband remained firm.

Then the Emperor, giving way to his temper, complained how bitter it was to have a family that helped him

so little in his labors and with his burdens. Every day he was made to feel how unfortunate he was not to have had children. His brothers were of no assistance to him and he might as well have placed this new crown on his own head; indeed, were it not that he feared such an action might lead to war, he would have already done so. How happy he would be if only he could bring himself neither to hope nor to expect any aid from his kinsmen.

The Emperor's arguments proved as fruitless as his anger and he dismissed us without having attained what he wished. During this entire conversation I had not said a word. What could I have said? It was always in the end my poor mother who had to suffer for these scenes. The Emperor's whole attitude seemed constantly to reproach her for the misfortune of being childless. Yet at times he was in doubt as to whether this was entirely her fault. The idea occurred to him to employ a singular stratagem to settle these doubts one way or another. He confided it to Prince Murat, and this is what took place.

Princess Caroline had as her protégée a young woman named Éléonore de La Plaigne,[18] who had attended our school at Saint-Germain. She was very beautiful but not at all clever and of such doubtful parentage that Madame Campan allowed her to remain at school only on the understanding that she would not leave except to get married. One day her father and mother brought her as a fiancé an army officer who had settled at Saint-Germain. The wedding took place three days later. After the wedding the husband disappeared, carrying off with him all his wife's belongings. Touched by the girl's misfortune, Madame Campan, who could not take her back as a pupil and feared that left to herself the girl might succumb to temptation, interested Princess Caroline in the case. It was arranged that the young woman should go and live some distance from Paris until her marriage could be annulled, and that when this had taken place she should receive a dot and, it was hoped, remarry under

better conditions. A year later she was discovered living alone in a little villa at Neuilly. On one occasion when the Emperor went to lunch with Prince Murat, she was present to announce the arrival of the guests. From that moment she vanished, and everyone explained her disappearance as he pleased. People said the Emperor occasionally went to see her, riding over from Saint Cloud. During the war with Prussia, she gave birth to a son,[19] whom Princess Caroline took care of. The Emperor only saw her once after his return. On this occasion, being naturally suspicious of women, he made her confess that during her stay at Neuilly she had frequently received visits from Prince Murat and had not been indifferent to him. From then on he remained always in doubt as to whether he was really the father of the child although everyone assured him such was the case.[20]

To return to my narrative. The Emperor was so indignant at his brothers' refusal to fall in with his plans—for Joseph also declined anything that would take him away from Paris—that he had the well-known letter about Eugène published in the Moniteur [the official newspaper] which states with equal emphasis how greatly the Emperor is attached to my brother and how angry he is with his own family. Eugène was made High Chancellor of Italy, one of the highest dignitaries of the State. When my brother received the news of his appointment he was at the head of his regiment, leading his men into Italy. The Emperor and Empress arrived there not long afterwards. They were crowned King and Queen of Italy.[21] The Emperor had asked us to accompany him, but my husband refused, and we went instead to Saint-Leu.

I had had occasion to meet Monsieur de Flahaut again at all the festivities that were held in connection with the coronation of the Emperor in Paris. Each time I felt ill at ease. I took the greatest care to avoid him and I so dreaded hearing the sound of his voice that one day while we were driving and he came up to the carriage

with the intention of speaking to me I ordered the coachman to drive on.

He was much upset at this attitude toward him, and his mother called on me to complain about it. I replied that I had no fault to find with her son and that my behavior had been entirely unconscious. When I examined my own conscience I decided that to have "no fault to find" with Monsieur de Flahaut was in itself a fault. I had thought all my efforts had cured me. To my sorrow I discovered by the pain I felt on catching sight of him once more that such was not the case. I vowed I would behave as naturally toward him as toward anyone else. At the first ball at which we met I spoke to him, and my voice trembled. Nevertheless I was pleased to have had even that much self-control. At the second ball I invited him to dance with me. While we waltzed he told me how much my coquetry had wounded him. I was indignant to hear myself accused of the fault I most despised. "What! Do you think me coquettish?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, I do. For at first, you were kind to me. I asked nothing more. Your kindness sufficed to make me happy and suddenly it seems to have turned to hatred."

I felt I had given him grounds for judging me thus. What strange things our hearts are! I did not wish to be loved. I fled from anything that faintly resembled love, and yet after all my struggles the mere accusation of being coquettish hurt me so deeply that, forgetting the ball, my rank, the fact that the eyes of all present were fixed upon me, I could not restrain my tears. I trembled even while I gave way to my feelings. What was I to say to those who might have noticed them? As for Monsieur de Flahaut he was even more deeply moved than I was myself. In a single instant my tears had revealed my feelings toward him more clearly than I should ever have dared in words.

"Once you cared for me a little. Why did you not let me know? You would have saved me much suffering!

And now, although I still love you and you alone, I am no longer free."

"No, no, I do not love you," I exclaimed. "Although I might possibly have feared to do so at one time, all that is past, I assure you."

"Then, at least, let us be friends," said he. "Your friendship will console me for all I have lost."

I gave him my promise. We separated.

This talk had calmed me a little. I had nothing to fear from a man who informed me that he had another liaison elsewhere. This proof of his confidence in my discretion was sufficient to convince me of Monsieur de Flahaut's respect and admiration. I could ask no more. Yet how fierce are the storms which sentiments we seek to subdue can arouse in our bosoms! No one was aware of the cause of my troubled looks and emotion. The Emperor, struck like everyone else by the change in my manner, said to my mother, who repeated his remark to me:

"Hortense no longer has her fine complexion. Her husband is making her unhappy. One of these days we must be prepared for a violent outburst of some kind. If she ever falls in love, she will feel it very deeply, and love makes one commit all sorts of follies."

"Ah," replied my mother, "but Hortense is so sensible."

"True enough, but her emotions are acute."

"She is so gentle, so subdued; she never acts in a hasty, impetuous manner."

"Don't be too sure she could not do so upon occasion. Look at the way she walks.[22] Listen to what she says. Everything about her reveals a highly keyed nature. If she were otherwise, she would not be your daughter."

When my mother told me this I cast my eyes down. My only reply was a smile, my only hope was that I might prove the Emperor had been mistaken.

Before we left for Saint-Leu my husband had obliged me to dismiss my head maid simply because he did not

like her and fancied that she always looked as if she were making fun of him. He gave me another maid, who is still with me, and my mother took my former one, who was very sorry to leave.

Some time previously I had taken as my reader Mademoiselle Cochelet, one of my fellow pupils at Saint-Germain. My interest in her had been aroused by the smallness of her fortune and the tender care with which she had nursed her mother through an extremely long illness.

I always liked to have with me someone whom I could eventually marry off with a dot. As I did this out of my own pocket-money my husband made no objections. My ladies in waiting, the undergovernesses of my children were all young and everyone in my household was lively and gay. Some of my attendants to be sure had noticed my husband's sternness toward me; but what need one fear when one has nothing to conceal? All were pleased to go to Saint-Leu. The number of persons familiar with my life at home had been small up to this time. What went on there was a secret, and my husband and I were considered to be quite a model couple. The only fault people found with us was that I was rather unkind in my attitude toward such a devoted husband. This coldness was supposed to be the result of my poor health. After the birth of my son, Louis presented me with a set of diamonds. I was hurt rather than pleased. A little more consideration would have pleased me better than this visible token of a harmony that did not exist. My ladies all were outspoken in their disapproval of my lack of appreciation for my husband's gift. I was the only one to suffer, because I did so in silence.

Nevertheless, at Saint-Leu my ladies became aware of how things actually stood. In the first place the service was as strict as though we had been living in a fortress. If any of my attendants took a stroll alone in the garden my husband would tease them and make unpleasant remarks about it. One day two of the ladies and I went

beyond the confines of the grounds. One of the gates was almost off, only held in place by four nails. My friends wanted to open it to see what the edge of the park looked like. This was certainly an innocent enough desire, and I did not forbid them doing as they wished. After having taken a few steps in the park we at once returned to the house. Already a search-party was being organized, and the next day the gate was walled up.

On another occasion a young man who called to leave a written petition of some kind asked to see one of the ladies in waiting. He was refused admission, his movements were watched and he was followed by spies. One of my husband's aides-de-camp by the name of Donnat, who was in charge of the château, made a tour of inspection every night through the entire park. Every morning he would be reprimanded.

"You are not doing your duty properly," my husband would exclaim. "A man entered the park last night. I know it. I heard him." Poor Donnat swore that such a thing was impossible. He was unable to convince his master. My husband without another word or for any reason that I could discover moved into a room of his own and assumed his severest air whenever he addressed me.

One day, apparently in great excitement, he sent for this aide-de-camp and said: "Donnat, get on your horse at once, ride as fast as you can, and you will overtake a young man who is just leaving the village. Ask him for the letter that was delivered to him here. Tell him you come from the person who sent it and who wants to add a postscript. Hurry off and come back immediately. Don't forget to take off your cross of the Legion so that you will not be recognized."

The aide-de-camp met no one on the road and went as far as the gates of Paris. He returned to report how unsuccessful his mission had been. My husband exclaimed, "Ah! those people always use by-paths."

I only heard these details when we were in Holland

where the aide-de-camp, having discovered my husband's true character, admitted to one of my ladies in waiting that he had for a long while believed I was carrying on illicit love-affairs, an idea which only was dispelled when he became thoroughly familiar with our domestic situation.

If any of my young ladies in waiting went to Paris, a retired soldier, Louis' chief spy, followed them everywhere and reported in writing everything they did. Sometimes their rooms would be ransacked, and their desks opened by force. They noticed this and sympathized with me in silence. Even Madame Campan was not spared. She had been invited to spend a few days at Saint-Leu and to bring my cousins Stéphanie de Beauharnais and Stéphanie Tascher, the sister of Monsieur Tascher, and Mademoiselle Monroe,[23] daughter of the President of the United States. While she was away her chambermaid was offered fifty thousand francs in exchange for the letter and portrait of mine that Madame Campan had kept. The maid could not give anything. The police later learned these details. What woman would not be compromised and have her reputation stained by such outrageous proceedings? But the person whose character is such that it allows him to cherish suspicions of this kind can only reap sorrow and torment. Never able to find the proof he seeks, he becomes more and more unstrung, he persists and falls a victim to a monomania, an *idée fixe,* that of finding out something which never occurred. Because he has done wrong he seeks to discover a crime and in a victim sees only a criminal. If he could really find a culprit his conscience would be satisfied, he would escape the accusation of having been unjust. He congratulates himself on the fact that he has only been cruel.

As for me, deprived of amusement and health, my strength failed rapidly, and my greatest sorrow sprang from the fact that no one was aware of my position. My mother, my brother were far away. Only Adèle realized the extent of my misfortune and sympathized with me.

I spent all my time taking care of my children and painting. I was just then copying the portrait that Gérard had made of me,[24] but I was unable to keep on with this as the smell of the paints reacted too violently on my nerves. My husband was irritated at seeing me always at work and apparently calm and resigned.

"You seem to be killing time," he said to me, "waiting for the coming of happier days." This phrase was apparently intended as an allusion to his own poor health. What could I answer? I grew weaker, I made no effort to regain my strength and in a short time should have pined away had not a violent shock saved me.

I received a letter from Eugène. It announced his appointment[25] as Viceroy of Italy and expressed his grief at being separated from his family and his native land. This letter gave me a terrible blow. All my misfortunes had made my brother's love more necessary than ever to me. He alone really knew me, really admired me. With him gone, I should be utterly exposed to my husband's hostility without a person who understood me or who would protect me. It was true that Eugène had no idea of what I was enduring. I had considered it one of my duties to hide my sufferings even from his eyes, but if he were near me I felt that I could at any moment draw upon the wealth of his sympathy if I felt the need. News of his death would not have hurt me more than did this message that we were separated indefinitely. My tears, which for a long time had refused me their comfort, welled up and flowed abundantly. They saved my life for, from that day on, I began again to take a little nourishment. Far from sharing my grief Louis had burst out laughing at the sight of my tears, and his heartlessness on this occasion was the one of his actions that wounded me deeper than any of the others.

On the other hand, I received from Monsieur de Flahaut a letter full of sympathy and understanding. He realized how deeply I was affected by this separation

from a brother I adored. He shared my grief the more as this separation meant for him the absence of a friend to whom he was deeply attached. How easy it is to touch a heart bowed down with sorrow. I felt that I was finding in the person who understood me so well the brother I had lost. Filled with this consoling thought I saw no reason for not answering this letter. This was the first time I had written him. The knowledge of his entire confidence in and friendship toward me won a favor which love would never have obtained.

My husband was ordered to take the baths at Saint Amand. We went there, leaving our youngest son with Madame de Boubers and taking only the eldest boy with us accompanied by his undergoverness, Adèle and Mademoiselle Cochelet. We stopped at Mortefontaine to visit Prince Joseph. I had a letter written to Madame Campan to give her news of my health. My *valet-de-chambre* took the letter and handed it over to my husband, who was seen by my ladies in waiting reading it in the park. On our arrival at Saint Amand I saw this same man, who had married one of my maids, ransacking my private papers. Upon being discovered he threw himself at my feet, told me I had his life in my hands, but that he was acting under the orders of his master, who, he confessed, had promised him a hundred louis if he could find proof of my guilt or anything against me. I remained as astonished and ashamed at my husband as I did at myself for being the victim of such an all-devouring passion. I told the servant that, as he only obeyed the orders of his master, he might continue to do so. It made no difference to me. Indeed how could I be expected to care about my husband's respect for me, that respect which I had valued so highly in the past, when I saw all his weaknesses? Later, worldly experience, which revealed to me how passion can disfigure even the most noble characters, rendered me more indulgent. In those days I was only willing to forgive Louis because he was my husband and

I felt it was my duty to do so. Finally I found an excuse for him in his bad health. Nevertheless, as I was satisfied with my own conduct, I became less and less anxious about his approval. Each day he did something which obliged me to consider it as having little value.

Once I found one of his secretaries opening my private correspondence. All my letters came from either my mother or my brother. Another day I was walking beside Adèle, who was showing me a letter from a young Polish woman, Christine Kosowska, that had been brought up with us at Saint-Germain. My son, my other ladies in waiting, my carriage and my servants were close at hand. My husband came up behind us, snatched away the letter eagerly and sought in it for some ground for his jealousy. Ashamed at having been mistaken he said to us:

"You ladies are clever, you wish to put me off the track, but I have just seen two men on horseback ride away from here."

Although afterwards he often referred to this story, we always thought he did so in fun. Not at all. While we were in Holland he repeated his remark to Madame de Broc in front of his entire court and his ministers of state, adding: "They thought I was taking my bath. I surprised these two ladies making believe to read a letter from a young girl at boarding-school, and I saw two men dash off at a gallop through the wood. I spoke to them about it, they pretended to be astonished. The next day I sent to Valenciennes and learned that, as a matter of fact, two young men arrived from Paris that day and left within twenty-four hours."

I ask every unprejudiced person how anyone could believe that a husband would amuse himself by inventing such stories about his wife, stories for which, he knew himself, there was not the least basis of fact. Perhaps by repeating them often he finally came to think they were really true.

The Emperor had returned [26] from Italy. The mag-

nificent ceremony at which he distributed the crosses of the Legion of Honor and which I had witnessed had been held before his departure. He went to Boulogne to hold a second similar ceremony on his fête day [27] in the presence of his assembled army. He had appointed my husband general in the Reserve Corps and sent him a special message that he and I should come to the camp of Boulogne and bring our son Napoleon. My husband did not agree to go himself. But after considerable hesitation and after keeping me in suspense till the last moment, he did not dare refuse the Emperor's request for me and my son. He finally gave me permission to be away eight days. I was delighted with the idea of having an opportunity of seeing those wonderful camps about which everyone was talking, and if I may admit the fact, I felt like a school-child out of sight of a stern teacher, as though I could breathe more freely when I was away from my husband.

The Emperor was living at a little country-place near Boulogne known as Pont-de-Briques. Caroline and Murat occupied another estate close by. I lived with them and we dined every day with the Emperor.

For the two preceding years our troops had been concentrated opposite England, and everyone expected an attack on England. The camps which surrounded Boulogne were placed beside the sea and resembled a city with long straight streets. Each hut had a little garden, flowers and birds. Near the Tour d'Odre stood the hut intended for the Emperor and beside it the one for General Berthier. All the flat-bottomed boats were lying in the different harbors waiting for the starting signal. One caught sight of England far in the distance. Her graceful ships, cruising up and down off the coast, seemed to form an unbreakable barrier. The scene as a whole conveyed an impression of grandeur and of an operation on a greater scale than anything similar that had ever been attempted. Everything stirred one's imagination. There

was this immense ocean about to become a battle-field and perhaps swallow up the finest flower of two nations' manhood; there were our troops proud of never having known defeat, restless after two years of inactivity, aflame with bravery and valor, imagining that they were already landing on the opposite shores. Their faith and their intrepidity made success seem possible, but an instant later the sight of the many obstacles which lay in their path, the fear of all the dangers through which they must pass to attain their goal, chilled the heart and disturbed the mind. The only thing this expedition needed was a favorable wind.

Of all the attentions a woman can receive those which soldiers offer her have a knightly quality about them that is particularly flattering. Never had there been, I believe, a more brilliant and imposing gathering of distinguished soldiers than this at which I found myself. Consequently it was the one time they really made an impression on me.

The Emperor had appointed his equerry General Defrance as my escort. Whenever I went to visit a camp it would at once be turned out for me and its troops maneuver before me. I asked for the pardon of some officers who had been punished for breaches of discipline and I was received with the greatest enthusiasm. Staff officers on horseback accompanied my carriage, and wherever I went brilliant music greeted my arrival. For the first time in my life I saw, at one of the reviews, an urn carried on a bandoleer by a soldier in one of the grenadier regiments. I was told that the Emperor, in order to honor the memory of a particularly brave soldier named La Tour d'Auvergne, had entrusted the latter's heart in a lead casket to the keeping of the oldest member of his former regiment. Whenever the roll-call took place the hero's name was called as if he were present, and the bearer of the casket replied: "Killed on the field of honor."

One day a luncheon was given for me at the camp at Ambleteuse. I wished to go there by sea in spite of the unfavorable wind. The Admiral took me. I saw the English vessels quite close at hand. The Dutch commanded by Admiral Ver Huell received me with loud cheers, but had no more idea than I had that a year later I should be their queen. Another time the Emperor had a little war game. The English, uneasy at seeing so many troops massed together, came in close to shore. They fired several shots, and the Emperor, always at the head of the French troops when they were in action, found himself between two fires. As we had followed him we were obliged to remain. My son was not the least frightened, and his uncle was delighted with him. But the generals trembled at seeing the Emperor expose himself in this manner. The ramrod of a clumsy soldier might have proved as fatal as an enemy's cannon-ball.

One thing impressed me particularly in the midst of this martial scene: the fact that these heroic troops, whose bravery terrified the foe when they went into battle, were as easy to control when in camp as a crowd of children and like children were amused at any little thing, any bird, any flower. The dashing warrior had been replaced by the mild-mannered schoolboy. During the luncheon given me at Ambleteuse under canvas by the Marshal Davout, some grenadiers who had learned appropriate verses for the occasion came and sang them to me while we were at table. They were as shy as young girls would have been. I was the more surprised at their timid manner, their awkward air and embarrassed attitude when singing about the invasion of England, for if I remember correctly each verse ended with the phrase:

> For crossing the Channel
> Isn't quite as difficult as drinking up the sea.

From the Emperor's drawing-room we frequently caught sight of the soldiers on guard-duty, who would

gather on the lawn that encircled the house. One of them would take a violin and give his comrades a dancing lesson. The beginners studied the steps and figures attentively while the more advanced pupils were able to complete the entire quadrille. We were much amused as we watched them from behind the blinds. The Emperor, who sometimes caught us unawares, would also laugh at the sight and seem to enjoy the innocent pastimes of his soldiers.

Was a serious attack on England ever really planned to take place? Or did the Emperor by these immense preparations intend to distract the public's attention from other things and concentrate it on that one point? I cannot say. This again is one of the questions which I shall not attempt to answer. Here as elsewhere in these memoirs I shall confine myself to telling what I saw.

The wife of Marshal Ney gave a brilliant reception [28] for me at Montreuil where her husband was in command. The morning was spent in watching the evolutions of the troops maneuvering especially for my benefit. In the evening a ball took place, which was suddenly interrupted by the news that the Emperor had just embarked. Everyone was excited and bewailed the fact that they were at a dance when the crossing into England was taking place. A host of young officers who were present dashed off along the highway to Boulogne. I followed them at full speed, always accompanied by General Defrance, who was consumed with impatience to rejoin the Emperor. I myself felt overcome with an inexpressible emotion at the idea that so momentous an event was taking place before my eyes. I already imagined that, standing at the Tour d'Odre, I was witnessing the naval battle and seeing our vessels plunge into the watery deep. I trembled at the thought.

Finally we arrived at our destination. I asked for the Emperor and learned that, as a matter of fact, he had superintended the embarkation of all the troops during

the night,[29] but that he had just returned to the house. I did not see him until dinner when he questioned Prince Joseph, who at that time was colonel in command of a regiment, as to his impressions of the embarkation, the manner in which it had been carried out and the time it had taken. Joseph stated that everyone believed it was the real departure from France and that the soldiers acting on this idea had sold their watches. The Emperor also inquired frequently if the semaphore had signaled the approach of a French squadron on board which was his aide-de-camp Lauriston. He seemed quite as though he were expecting only the arrival of this squadron and a favorable wind to give orders for the departure of the flotilla of transports.

The eight days allowed me by my husband were almost over. I hesitated to remain twenty-four hours longer. The Emperor, who wished me to witness some combat between his ships and the English vessels, was anxious for me to stay on. I resisted so energetically that he said crossly:

"Then you are free to go, madame, since you fear offending your husband more than you do displeasing me."

With these words he left me abruptly. I did not know what to do. To return under such conditions would have been most disagreeable. Joseph, who was present, told me that it was out of the question to leave the Emperor so annoyed. It was the first sign of impatience he had ever shown toward me, and I was much concerned over it. I decided to remain a day longer. When he saw me the next morning the Emperor, satisfied with my having yielded to him, spoke to me with a truly fatherly kindness, saying:

"You really are too afraid of your husband. He is only unreasonable in his demands because you allow him to take an unfair advantage of you. A good woman has always the rights which her virtue confers on her."

I went through Dunkirk, and through Calais. Everywhere I saw handsome regiments pass by and I felt the more regret at leaving this brilliant army when I thought with terror that a few days later it was to be exposed to the most appalling dangers.

On all my trips I had caught sight of Monsieur de Flahaut accompanying my carriage with the other officers. In the evening, also, when we were the guests of Caroline, we had sung together, but we had never been able to talk alone, although I was well aware that he was eager to speak to me.

I returned to Saint Amand [30] delighted with my trip and full of the sights I had beheld. I described them in detail to my husband. He listened coldly to my account and was not in the least grateful to me for having preferred to return home rather than witness the naval combat. The more enthusiastic I became in my narrative, the more annoyed he seemed to be.

We were expecting daily to receive news of the crossing to England when we suddenly saw all the troops come back through the place where we were living, hurrying by forced marches to the Rhine.

Austria had broken the peace and declared war. We returned to Paris in order to see the Emperor before his departure for Germany.[31] He took Murat with him and appointed my husband Governor of Paris in the place of Murat.[32] Louis was again annoyed.

"He had better not expect that I shall agree to everything the way Murat did," my husband said to me. "My brother perhaps expects that I shall make myself unpopular as governor and adopt as stern measures as those employed to keep order in the days of the Duc d'Enghien."

"If you are asked to do things that are distasteful to your sense of honor," I replied, "you can always refuse; but as things are at present how can you decline to help your brother?"

"My health does not allow me to make myself useful.

Otherwise I should be in the army, but I am not well enough for that."

Nevertheless Louis accepted the appointment. In spite of all his objections he was dominated by the Emperor's will. It was Napoleon who had brought him up, perhaps somewhat too severely, and my husband had kept from his early days a sort of fear which prevented his contradicting the Emperor to his face. As a result of his early training Louis lacked the self-confidence which would have allowed him to express freely his very decided nature. Consequently, although born with a determined will of his own, he lacked that incisive driving power needed to execute the decisions he made. Yet when he did accept a post he filled it well, better even than anybody else. He even sometimes came to like his new duties. His greatest handicap was the fact that whenever he took up a new thing he did so reluctantly and had a preconceived idea that people were against him.

The Emperor's genius showed itself in the smallest as well as in the greatest matters. My husband sometimes repeated to me orders he had given which showed his prodigious memory. If he asked to have reinforcements sent him he would himself indicate the number of officers and men available as well as the different points where they were stationed. If he met isolated soldiers belonging to different divisions on their way to join the regiments which were marching toward the Rhine, he knew exactly where each regiment was to be at a given day and indicated their eventual destination and how to reach it.

While I was at Boulogne my mother had been taking the waters at Plombières. During the war she went to Strasbourg to be in close touch with the Emperor. She informed me before her departure that the police had discovered my husband's spy system, and the Emperor had reproved Louis seriously in regard to it. I have already referred to it on different occasions. The most curious fact, however, and one which I did not know at

the time, was that five or six young men in Paris were constantly being followed in order to discover which one of them was my lover. They were selected from among those with whom I danced the most frequently, as I never received any man at home. The spies had not been able to discover a single thing. What evidence could they have found against me? But it was likely that my name was frequently mentioned in low drinking-places where such informers gather. Was it likely to be spoken respectfully when even my husband did not respect it?

I tried to find something that would distract my mind. The best way seemed to me to be to succor those who were in need. I took advantage of my husband's position to have many poor people admitted to the various hospitals. I accepted the post of president of the Asile de la Providence; I took over several beds at the old people's home at Sainte Périne; I attended the meetings of the Maternal Society presided over by Madame de Pastoret.

But although these occupations provided relief from my worries I was unable to find any surcease from the anxiety caused by public events. War had begun. Not a day passed without the arrival of a messenger bringing news of some brilliant victory. The idea of the dangers which threatened the person of whom I thought all too often showed me how much I cared for him and dimmed my joy. When a dispatch arrived I trembled lest it contain his name. One day [33] he was mentioned for distinguished conduct, another time for having received a wound. Fortunately I was alone when I received the news. The acuteness of my emotion was too great to allow me to imagine that it was purely the result of a friendly concern for his safety. When I saw the woman whom I believed to be in love with him apparently calmer than myself, I was furious with her. When I saw her sad and downcast I felt attracted to her and forgave her the moments of anguish which she so often inflicted on me.

Our victorious troops had pressed forward up to the

very gates of Vienna itself when Prussia assumed a hostile attitude toward us. My husband received orders to go to Nimeguen and take command of an army of observation. His departure touched me, for after all he was the father of my children. How could I fail to forgive him and wish him Godspeed? He was about to be in danger.

I often received letters from him. War did not break out where he was stationed, and he traveled about in Holland. He received the most flattering attention but hastened to return home in spite of instructions to remain at his post.[34]

My mother sent me the letters she received from the Emperor. They were laconic but often spoke of what was about to happen and the successful exploits of his troops. The Emperor wrote me once from Vienna that he expected my son to prove worthy of the lofty destiny which Fate held in store for him. After the battle of Austerlitz the Emperor asked my husband to have the little boy sent him so that he could show him to the victorious army. The request was refused.

About this time the Emperor created the kingdoms of Bavaria and Würtemberg and the grand duchies of Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, Nassau and Berg. On his return to Munich he decided to marry my brother to the Princess Augusta of Bavaria, daughter of the King. My mother had left Strasbourg and joined the Emperor in Munich. She wished me to meet her there. My husband would not allow me to leave, and this refusal caused me one of the greatest disappointments I have ever experienced.

Eugène was ordered to go to Munich without knowing the reason for his journey. A few days later he was adopted by the Emperor as his son and married [35] by the Prince-Primate to a most lovely and noble-minded princess. On this occasion the Emperor wrote me a letter containing the following flattering sentence: "The

Princess of Bavaria possesses many good qualities. You will find her in every way worthy to be a sister to you." In connection with this wedding he had to face several family quarrels. Murat and his wife were unwilling to attend. Following his last brilliant campaign Murat would not suffer a younger man to take precedence at court over him. He broke his sword on hearing the news that the Emperor had adopted my brother.[36] Already Eugène's appointment as Viceroy of Italy had angered him greatly. Caroline was indignant over such an advantageous match for a family she did not consider related to her. On her return she spoke to me frankly and admitted that at Munich she had advised her brother the Emperor to obtain a divorce in order to marry the Princess Augusta himself. The latter would have been just the wife for Napoleon according to Caroline. But she was obliged to obey her brother's commands and did so with the most obvious reluctance.

The Bonaparte family soon had another occasion to feel vexed. My cousin Stéphanie de Beauharnais, daughter of the Count de Beauharnais, had lost her mother when still very young. She had been educated at Saint-Germain under the supervision of my mother. Now she was fifteen years old and possessed all the charm and grace that belong to that age. The Emperor took her out of school, adopted her as his daughter, and married her to the hereditary Grand Duke of Baden. Caroline was so annoyed by this social advancement that at the state receptions, where my cousin, owing to her new rank, found herself beside the Princess Murat, the latter turned her back on her and pointedly avoided speaking to the new Grand Duchess.

At this time the foreign monarchs were so eager to secure an alliance with the Emperor that they would have accepted a relative of his even in the thirteenth degree. So long as the Emperor was willing to adopt such a relative this adoption was more than sufficient.

The Court of Würtemberg made certain proposals in view of marriage between the Crown Prince and my mother's cousin Mademoiselle Stéphanie Tascher, but the Emperor refused, not being pleased with that young woman's conduct. While she was staying with my mother, Stéphanie had lost her head over the General R——.[37] A marriage between them was entirely out of the question. My mother was indignant about it, repeating constantly, "How can anyone choose a man without education or any sort of distinction except that of being a good soldier?" But these objections proved useless. The more people seek to belittle the object of our affections, the more our pride increases our attachment to him. The Emperor, seeing how indignant the Empress was with her cousin and believing that I could reason more calmly, had asked me to speak to Stéphanie and inform her that he would never consent to such a marriage. I thought the best means of changing her mind was to appeal to her heart. After emphasizing the inflexible refusal of the Emperor and the Empress to consent to the marriage, I had shown her how obstinacy on her part would lead to the unhappiness and disgrace of the man she cared for, how she would be responsible for this state of things and consequently, would also be miserable. I had added some words of praise regarding General R——. Stéphanie had been touched by my arguments. I had succeeded. She gave up all ideas of this marriage, returned to Madame Campan's school, and a year later became the wife of the Duc d'Arenberg.

The marriage of Stéphanie de Beauharnais took place with truly royal splendor. Cardinal Caprara, Papal Nuncio, pronounced the nuptial benediction and magnificent ceremonies took place. At one of the court balls Caroline and I danced a quadrille. My partner was the Crown Prince of Bavaria, who was spending some time in Paris. He was not attractive in appearance, was almost deaf and stuttered. Besides he was deeply marked with

smallpox, yet he was clever. The fact that he was Eugène's brother-in-law was more than sufficient recommendation for me. Consequently I took the best possible care of the Prince. I loaned him my diamonds. I arranged them myself on his hat. I did my best to make him appear to advantage. My quadrille was more admired than that of Caroline, who was again rather jealous over this trifling success.

The Princess Pauline, another sister of the Emperor, had accompanied her husband to Santo Domingo, where he had died. She married again, her second husband being Prince Borghese, who was not particularly clever but good-looking and who possessed a great fortune in Rome. Pauline's poor health obliged her to take constant care of herself. She had the reputation, which she well deserved and of which she was very proud, of being the handsomest woman in France, perhaps even in Europe.

Her elder sister the Princess Elisa had been made Princess of Lucca. She was intelligent and had good judgment. Later when she had become Grand Duchess of Tuscany she governed her realm as ably as a clever man would have done, and this in spite of the fact that she was not particularly well educated, although she had been brought up at the school at Saint Cyr. Her strength of will replaced book-learning.

All the members of the Bonaparte family were much attached to one another as long as there was no question of mutual ambition involved. In that case there would be an alliance formed against the one who happened to be favored. Soon, however, the union would be reorganized.

The day the news of Elisa's appointment as Princess of Lucca became known my husband and I called on all his sisters. We began with Caroline. The latter with a forced laugh remarked: "Well, well, Elisa has become a ruling Prince now. To be sure her army is only a corporal's guard. What an honor that is to be sure!" It

was easy to note the vexation concealed beneath this flippancy.

As for Princess Borghese she made no effort to hide her feelings. "My brother," she said, "only cares for Elisa and forgets all the rest of us. Caroline, who has children and a distinguished husband, deserves better treatment and more independence. So far as I am concerned I don't ask for anything. I am an invalid, but it is not fair toward Caroline."

I saw that she was excited and to calm her I said: "My sister, the Emperor loves you all equally. Elisa is the eldest. He begins with her. Later he will doubtless provide for you and for Caroline. He cannot do everything at once."

I thought this remark might soothe her and my husband confirmed my views, but she exclaimed warmly, "You are in no position to criticize, madame, you who obtain anything you ask for!"

I remained silent with surprise. She had no idea of how mistaken she was. To be sure, what I wanted had nothing to do with royal honors. I turned away and left her without saying another word. My husband kissed her, saying as he did so, "Pauline, you are not well." And we left the house.

Of all the Emperor's sisters, Caroline, who had been for some time at school with me at Saint-Germain, was the only one I became ever at all intimate with. Nor did I count very much on even her friendship. The petty vexations I had to suffer from this family proved that they did not like me. Nor were my mother and brother more popular with them. I had consolation in the thought that I had nothing with which to reproach myself.

The Emperor went to spend a few days at Grignon,[38] the handsome estate which Marshal Bessières had bought from Monsieur Auguié. I was glad of this opportunity to revisit the spots where some of the happiest hours of my youth had been spent. Here, close to the large pond,

was a path that had been named after me; there, beside a little stream, was the place where I had run a fish-hook into my finger and in the midst of my weeping comrades displayed my courage by tearing it out without waiting for the arrival of a physician.[39] All these memories made me feel more light-hearted.

My husband had not dared to refuse the Emperor's invitation for both of us. I had gone to Grignon without Louis, accompanied by the Princess of Baden, her husband, and the Prince of Bavaria. The Emperor spent his days hunting and retired early.

We took tea in the evening with the Princess of Baden. One day the idea of playing a trick on the Prince of Bavaria occurred to us. We put a wig on a doll, dressed it in a pretty nightcap and short nightgown and put it on his bed. We then composed a letter supposed to be from a lady who did not sign her name but who was most anxious to see him and who was awaiting him in his apartment. A servant delivered him the note while we were all together. The Prince read it with an interest he was unable to conceal, took another letter from his pocket and compared the two. He stepped over to me and inquired anxiously, "Do you think the handwriting is the same?" I assured him that it was evident the two letters had been written by the same person, the only difference being that one had been composed carefully, whereas the other had been dashed off hurriedly. He was convinced that a lady was waiting for him and became greatly upset trying to find a way of getting rid of her for fear of what the Emperor might think. He took my arm, begged me to save him and to give orders that a woman who dared to be so forward in her advances be dismissed at once. He gave me her name, and we thereby discovered that it was the famous Mademoiselle Georges whose letter he had and about whom he was so embarrassed.

In spite of our laughter at seeing him so confused and at his disclosures, he refused to believe that it could be a

joke. He insisted we should all go to his apartment with him. He could not bear to go there alone, and his fear was intense for what the Emperor with his well-known severity in such matters might say. Finally we all took lights and led him back through the long corridors. Our escort looked like a procession. The Prince of Bavaria was in front. Behind us came our ladies in waiting. Everyone else in the house had gone to bed. When we entered his room the Prince's fright and our mirth increased at the sight of a figure sleeping peacefully in his bed. There the joke had to end. We were obliged to show him the wig on the doll. He seemed very much chagrined. The next morning the Emperor and Empress laughed heartily on hearing of our prank. I do not know whether the Prince, who laughed a great deal about it at the time, ever really forgave us.[40]

CHAPTER VI

THE QUEEN OF HOLLAND: THE COURT OF KING LOUIS (MAY, 1806—APRIL, 1807)

Prince Louis Is Called to the Throne of Holland—A Last Glimpse of France—Arrival at the Hague—Public Rejoicing, Private Misery—Trip to the Rhineland—The Battle of Jena—Two More Admirers—Portrait of Talleyrand—Home-Life of the King—A Domestic Peace-Treaty and Why It Was Not Signed.

SUCH moments of innocent amusement were of brief duration. Youth needs them, but as soon as I returned to my home I found myself once more in an atmosphere of sternness and severity. My sorrows were not yet complete.

A delegation headed by Admiral Ver Huell arrived from Holland, and my husband informed me one morning that the Emperor had just told him that he, Louis, was to be King of Holland.

"I do hope you will not accept the appointment," I exclaimed. As a matter of fact I expected my husband to make the same objections he had employed when it was a question of giving a throne to his son, and I thought he would refuse this crown which he did not seem anxious to obtain. As soon as the question of his nomination came up Caroline called on us.

"I attended the marriage of Prince Eugène at Munich," she said, "only on the express understanding with the Emperor that I was to have the Dutch crown. I do not wish to remind him of his promise without your consent, but will you not allow me to do so?" Both my husband and I assured her that we should be delighted to see her receive the crown, but she did not succeed in getting it.

My fate had ordained that these royal honors were to be the bitterest of all my afflictions since they involved a separation from all that was dear to me, from all I had in the way of consolation, from my family, from my friends, from the land which I had been taught to love so dearly, at a time when I was already miserable. I admit that my husband's calm manner surprised me. I did not believe he was ambitious, yet I recognized that he was well pleased with what had occurred. Until then every change had been a source of annoyance to him. But now he enjoyed the idea of becoming independent, of becoming his own master and, what was more, of becoming my master at the same time. No longer would any social decorum, any sense of obligation restrain him from exercising his rights over me. Freed from the proximity of his brother he had no longer any cause to fear him. This, as I understood later, was the reason for his secret joy and the apparent resignation with which he accepted the offered throne.

As for me I had no illusions as to my fate; I knew my hardships would increase. For a moment I had the idea of flinging myself at the Emperor's feet, revealing all the torments I suffered with my husband, and begging permission not to be obliged to follow him into a foreign country where nothing would restrain those traits in his character, which I knew so well and dreaded so intensely. But when my eyes fell on my children the idea of being separated from them seemed to me the most cruel fate of all. I stifled my distress, I made up my mind to accompany these little ones and shower on their tender youth all that care of which it stood in such great need. I kept thinking of a tale which had made a deep impression on me in my own childhood of how a woman, having left her husband, returned to his house years afterwards and took the post of housekeeper, suffering rebuffs and humiliations of all kinds in order to be able to look after her dear children and live beside them. I was convinced I was

like the mother in this story, that ascending this throne was the same as entering into bondage. Thus maternal love gave me the strength to accept my new and painful duties.

Everything combined to cast a dark shroud over this rise in rank which caused me so much alarm. We were in mourning just then for the Princess of the Asturias.[1] It was in black that I received the congratulations,[2] which my tears might have made seem like an expression of condolence.

Misfortune makes one superstitious. My sadness in the midst of the general gloom made me still more alarmed as regards the future. Yet people thought I was happy.

The Prince of Bavaria called on me at the same time as the Dutch envoys. My grief, which was apparent in spite of my efforts to conceal it, surprised him greatly and made him and the others fear that I disliked their country. The Emperor, in order to realize his plans, required his brothers to be ambitious. Of all the annoyances his family caused him he was the most prepared to pardon those which sprang from a desire for position and power, since those were the feelings he best understood. Hence he could not forgive me for being downcast because I was to be made a queen.

"Can it be," he said, "that you are not worthy of such a position? To assume the crown, to make your subjects happy—that is a prospect which ought to delight your heart. I have done something for you the like of which is not to be found elsewhere. The constitution makes you regent in your own right.[3] This honor is a flattering one. Show that you deserve it."

"Ah, Sire," I exclaimed, "you can do what you please. I shall always have middle-class ideals, if that is the term to apply to love for one's country, one's friends and one's family."

He laughed at my remark and cut short my farewells

with my mother in order to prevent too great a display of emotion.

At one time it had been suggested that my children remain in France on account of their being the sole heirs to the throne. The Council of State had been favorable to the idea, but the Emperor, who when my husband refused to allow him to adopt our son had caused a decree to be passed by which he became the legal guardian of all boys in his family after they had reached the age of seven, was reluctant to have this law infringed on, and perhaps also wished to avoid objection from us.

Monsieur de Talleyrand, who told me the above details, was very anxious to have his brother Boson de Périgord appointed as our grand chamberlain, but my husband refused. All the younger members of the French nobility who had not yet definitely rallied to the Imperial party at court thought they could reconcile their political attitude and their ambitions by seeking to obtain appointments at the Court of Holland. Monsieur Rainulphe d'Osmond asked for the post of chamberlain, another person that of equerry, but those whom my husband referred to as "agreeables" were not the kind of persons likely to appeal to him, and he declined to consider their requests.

As I was on the point of leaving for Holland Monsieur Adrien de Montmorency informed me that Madame de Gesvres, a woman eighty years of age, had been ordered to leave Paris. I went to Saint Cloud to see the Emperor in regard to the matter. When he learned that the unfortunate woman was so advanced in years, and especially that she was the last descendant of the famous Duguesclin, not only did he allow her to remain in Paris, but he bestowed on her an income of six thousand francs. This is an example of how severe he could be when acting on reports received through the police service and how he would palliate this severity when informed of the truth.

People of high rank should at least be able to enjoy that pleasure which comes from doing good, and this is

a delight of which the heart never tires. Consequently my most agreeable occupation before my departure was to obtain favors for people in whom I was interested. Nominations in the tax-collecting department were the only appointments which the Emperor made directly and which could be obtained through influence. All the other posts had to be applied for through the different departmental channels. For two years I had been seeking to obtain a position in the tax-collecting department, worth twenty thousand francs a year, for the fiancé of one of Adèle's cousins. The family of the girl were eagerly awaiting this appointment before concluding the arrangements for the marriage. I had already several times bored the Emperor with my petitions in regard to this matter, when one day I heard that unimportant though the post was it had been given to another candidate. I did not dare speak to the Emperor again about it directly, but I complained to my mother saying that, having promised me a favor which would cause rejoicing in a family in which I was interested, he forgot my petition and did not even grant me this small wish. My mother reported my indignation to the Emperor, and it had the desired effect. The Emperor laughed, and that same evening sent me a note appointing my protégé receiver general of taxes in one of the principal cities in France, a position carrying with it an income of 100,000 francs. How delighted I was at the thought of the happiness I was about to dispense. I myself bore the glad tidings to that modest household whose members a moment before might have been complaining at the harshness of Fate, and which now was safe from everything except the shock of a too sudden felicity.

The marriage of Adèle was another matter that was much on my mind at this time. I was as difficult to please in making my choice of a husband for her as I had been in selecting one for myself. No one seemed to measure up to my standards. It was agreed that she should join

me in Holland, where I hoped to find a man worthy of her. I must do my husband the justice of saying that in spite of his usual suspiciousness of all women he never dared suspect the character of Adèle. Her gentle nature, her well-balanced mind obliged him, as they did everyone else, to submit to her charm and at the same time to admire her. For a long while he sought to make her act as judge of our domestic difficulties. He explained to her his grievances and attempted to justify his conduct. Not being able to convince her that he was in the right, he finally ceased to honor her with his confidence. When I said good-by to Adèle the hope of seeing one another in the near future assuaged our grief.

Saint-Leu had been fixed as the point from which we were to start on our journey. My husband and all my household were already there. I came back late one day from Saint Cloud where I had with so much difficulty said farewell to my mother and I stopped at Paris to make final arrangements. The courtyard of my house was full of baggage carts and people. The first part of our baggage train was about to leave. All this bustle and the sight of the horses which were to take me away from home were painful to me. Two days more and I in turn should be saying adieu to France. Finally the carts started and complete silence took the place of the earlier confusion. At that moment the only servant remaining in the house informed me that a visitor was asking for me who wished to speak to me in private. It was Monsieur de Flahaut.[4] The fact that it was impossible for him to enter my house under normal conditions had not prevented him from casting[5] aside all prudence in his desire to bid me good-by. For the first time since I knew that he was dear to me I found myself alone with him. Alarm and emotion held me spellbound. As he stepped nearer to me I uttered a cry.

"Remember," he said, "people may come in and you would be compromised." "Ah," I replied, "I do not

care what people think about me as long as I do not do any harm."

Then, with the utmost simplicity, I confessed my love for him. At the same time, however, I declared that dear as he was to me virtue was still dearer, since it was virtue alone which sustained me in the midst of my husband's hideous suspicions, that it was my only true consolation, and without it I could not survive. I told him I wished him every happiness, I assured him he would always have my friendship. I left him in a condition that cannot be expressed in words. I was proud of having such control over him, and the consoling thought came to me in the midst of the tears evoked by so sad a parting that at last the man whose admiration meant so much to me knew what was in my heart. Yet how much dearer a person becomes when he has seen us to our best advantage, when he has been able to appreciate our qualities, especially if others are blind to them and accuse us unjustly.

My husband, my children and I finally left Saint-Leu on the evening of June 15, 1806.[6] My eldest son slept all night on my knees, the other boy on those of his governess. My husband and I, absorbed in our own thoughts and without saying a word to one another, probably both suffered from the fact that we were unable to share our common grief or seek consolation from the person whom sacred ties should have rendered dear to us. Each looked upon Destiny as his only friend.

I shall not describe our journey in detail. The martial escorts, the honors, receptions and speeches only wearied me. I wrote my mother from the Château of Laeken near Brussels, and I wrote the Emperor from Antwerp asking him to pardon a prisoner who had been sentenced.

Now came the most painful moment of all, that instant when I was obliged to leave our French escort and when I caught sight of the Dutch authorities waiting for us on the other side of the frontier. Change one's nationality!

NAPOLEON CHARLES
PRINCE ROYAL OF HOLLAND
Portrait by Gérard in the
Collection of Prince Napoleon

Become something else than French! Sorrowfully I cast my eyes back to the land where I had been born. Should I ever see it again? Should I ever again meet my friends? Should they not forget me? At that moment I felt as though I were doomed to remain forever a stranger, both to those I now left behind me, and to those who were about to adopt me. I found myself cut off from everything and everybody absolutely, by a separation comparable with that which makes death so dreadful to us.

My throbbing heart prevented my replying to the speech with which the Dutch authorities greeted me. My husband did so for both of us. However deep his own grief seemed, he knew how to reply to complimentary phrases and did so all along the way. We stopped at the Palais du Bois near the Hague and made our entry there a few days later.

I have always been so anxious to reassure and place at their ease those whom my presence might intimidate that the art of receiving guests and visitors came to me naturally. For instance, at a reception where four hundred women were presented to me I found something to say to each one.

One day Admiral Ver Huell appeared to me to be much embarrassed. He had assumed the reins of office during the time between our appointment and our arrival and, in accordance with the English custom which was followed in Holland for the Prince and Princess of Orange, he had placed my name beside that of the King in the public prayers. The first act of my husband was to remove the name of the Queen. The Admiral pointed out the bad impression this would make, especially as the custom had been in force for a month. He even came to tell me about it, thinking that I would protest. But what was there to be done? I could not help feeling hurt at this discourtesy on the part of my husband, although I should have been so accustomed to it as not to notice it any longer.

Another time the general commanding the royal guard came to ask me to tie the new ribbons to the regimental colors. I wrote to Paris for ribbons embroidered like those which my mother had distributed to the imperial guard but with my name instead of hers on them. When my husband saw the ribbons he had them taken off, saying that my name was ridiculously prominent, and that it looked as though it were I who had presented the flags. Such annoying incidents occurred so frequently that I sought to efface myself more and more. I limited my activities to my maternal duties and to my customary occupations such as painting, writing songs and taking history lessons from the Abbé Bertrand.

Much to my astonishment the King, who was organizing his official household, filled the most important posts with Frenchmen chosen from among those who had followed him to Holland. None of them expected as much. They had thought they would only spend three months each year at our court on special missions from France. They were delighted. The Dutch very properly protested against this proceeding, and misunderstandings between the two parties arose. Monsieur de Sénégra, whom the Emperor had never been willing to receive, obtained the most prominent position [that of general inspector and head of the navy department]. Everyone had cause to complain against his spying and his frequent lack of manners.

Although my husband had not spoken to me for some time, one day we had a long conversation. He first sent me a letter reviewing the entire history of our married life. His affection for me, his regrets and my coldness toward him were all described in detail. Later he came in person to beg for a reconciliation.

"Stop," I said. "I no longer consent to such a thing. My sorrows have been too great. I have been spared nothing, neither your unjust suspicions nor your scandalous investigations into my conduct. I have forgiven you,

but so much pain has inevitably altered my feelings toward you. Change your conduct, and my sentiments toward you will change also. I shall not try to give you a false impression, but you must make me forget the past, make me care for you again, and this requires time. It cannot be done at once."

He became angry, shed a few tears and told me that he did not believe in woman's virtue, that I had been unhappy and had certainly sought to console myself.

"True," I replied, "and I had one consolation at least of which you could not deprive me, the knowledge I did not deserve the treatment you inflicted on me."

My husband left me without having uttered a word of affection or of regret.

Our entry into Rotterdam was remarkable for the enthusiasm of the spectators. It is the same thing everywhere; people love a change and expect what is new will be an improvement. My only sensation was one of fear when I felt myself carried along by a mob that seemed to have gone mad. In spite of our efforts we had not been able to prevent the crowd from unharnessing our horses and drawing our carriage along by hand. This explosive joy so similar to furious rage froze me with terror. My nerves were too weak to bear the sight, and every moment I imagined someone was being crushed beneath our wheels.

"Alas!" I said to my husband as I remembered tales I had heard from Madame Campan, "these are receptions such as were held in France to celebrate the arrival of Marie Antoinette. Later the mob sacrificed her with equal enthusiasm."

It was not the moment to indulge in such painful memories. My state of mind affected everything I saw. Nevertheless I witnessed one spectacle that was truly an imposing one—the launching of a magnificent man-of-war. This is a ceremony so impressive that it appeals strongly to the imagination.

We did not remain long in Holland but went on to Wiesbaden where the King wished to take the waters on account of his health. We lived in the Palace of Mayence. The Grand Duchess of Darmstadt as well as many foreign princes and those belonging to the house of Nassau came to see us. The latter gave us a charming entertainment at the palace.

Prince Charles of Nassau told me one day that he had heard how popular I was already in Holland, a country which had been greatly attached to the family of the Prince of Orange. People knew I was related to this family, and he himself gloried in that fact. I considered the compliment rather exaggerated. I knew there had been a marriage between my family and that of Bavaria and Nassau, but it had occurred so long ago it was not to be taken seriously. Indeed it struck me as highly probable that it was the crown I now wore which caused people to recall this relationship. I had never paid any attention to it and it was merely by chance that I knew of it and understood the Prince's compliment. On the other hand I never had any reason to feel hostile to his family and would gladly have exchanged my royal rank for a little of their peace of mind.

Everywhere I went something disagreeable or unpleasant happened. When I passed through Nimiguen with my husband I was so ill I could not continue my journey. The King went on alone and I followed two days later. I did not know my new courier any better than I knew the other members of our household. Catching sight of him running beside the carriage with tears streaming down his cheeks, I asked the reason. It seems he had just lost the purse which had been given him to pay the post horses, and expected that the equerry in charge would oblige him to meet the loss out of his own pocket. The sum was about a thousand francs. I told him not to worry, that I would give him the money. I did so on our arrival and forgot all about the matter. This man was

sent back to Paris. I gave him no letter to take back, but Madame de Villeneuve and Mademoiselle Cochelet gave him some notes for their family. On his return my husband's secretary, acting on his master's orders, had the courier searched and demanded the letters he was thought to be bringing me, concealed about his person. The gift of the thousand francs had become known; I was supposed to have bribed the messenger. In spite of all the threats he was unable to hand over what he did not have in his possession. It is easy to imagine how deeply my feelings were hurt when the courier told me of the treatment he had undergone, at the same time offering me his services and assuring me of his devotion. I had been reduced to this: a servant believed he could be of service to me, and even his devotion was an insult.

I fancy, however, that my torments cannot have been as great as those of my husband. His restless nature did not give him an instant's peace. Our apartments were some distance apart. Frequently I heard him in the drawing-room, when everyone else had retired, steal up and listen outside my door. One evening one of my ladies in waiting with whom I was chatting while getting undressed came near having to spend the night in my room, for the next morning my chambermaid and I discovered that we had been locked in. Generally we laughed about so many strange occurrences, but they injured my reputation to such an extent that I felt them deeply.

My husband, leaving the waters of Wiesbaden, went to Aix-la-Chapelle, where I followed him two days later. Adèle had joined me at Mayence. I sent all my carriages and the officers of my household to wait for me at Cologne and embarked on the Rhine aboard the handsome yacht belonging to the Prince of Nassau. Monsieur Auguié, who had come there in order to bring his daughter to me, was the only man who accompanied me while we were on the water. The weather was fine, the scenery delightful. We spent our time admiring the different landmarks

which passed before our eyes. These rocks, these towered keeps recalled the age of chivalry. The sight of them transported me back to the past, away from the age we live in, which always seems the least attractive. My eldest son played near at hand, while I sang ballads and accompanied myself on my guitar. I also composed some ballads myself, inspired by the beauties of the landscape. Many pilgrims, such as I had never seen before, followed us reciting psalms, and from the neighboring shores the villagers put out in boats to bring fruit and flowers. In the evening we anchored and fell asleep, each in a little cabin, soothed by the sound of a serenade from some village near by. This calm after so much agitation, this freedom after so much constraint combined to make these three days of sailing three of the happiest in my life.

When we arrived at Cologne I saw the entire population waiting for me on the shore. What an abrupt contrast! The calm solitude had delighted me; the sight of this crowd revived the memory of my rank and the sense of my duties. I wished to preserve as long as possible the memories of the days just past. I stepped on shore before reaching the official landing-stage, and on foot, leading my son by the hand, I sought to discover the nearest inn. But I was quickly surrounded by a numerous escort commanded by General Dupont. There was nothing to be done. I admitted to the General that he had outmaneuvered me and I climbed into the great stage-coach, big enough for six people, which had doubtless belonged to the former elector.

I was obliged to pass through the city at a snail's pace in the midst of a curious crowd, and in the evening attend a ball given for me by the Grand Duke of Berg, who was staying at Düsseldorf. His wife Princess Caroline had stayed in Paris, dissatisfied with her husband's appointment as Grand Duke of Berg and Cleves, which she considered less than his—and her—desert. She never would consent to go there.

On leaving France I thought I had said a last farewell to all those whom I cared for. Fate ruled otherwise. Monsieur de Flahaut passed through Aix-la-Chapelle while we were still there. He accompanied the Grand Duke of Berg when the latter called to say good-by before joining the army which was marching on Prussia. Nothing is more painful than the sight of the man who is dear to you leaving to expose his life. How sad it is not to be able to say a word of farewell, to be obliged to stifle in one's bosom all one's prayers and fears!

When he returned to Holland my husband was obliged to take command of the army that was marching towards Wesel. As a raid by the English forces was feared, owing to the country's having been stripped of troops, it was decided my children and I should go and live with my mother, who had accompanied the Emperor to Mayence and was to remain there for the duration of the war. [7]

The Princess of Baden also came there from Mannheim where she was living. We witnessed the arrival of all those young ladies, who considered us their natural protectresses and who were anxious to have news of their husbands. Our time was spent in waiting for messengers [8] from the front and praying for the success of our army. The day of my arrival I heard of the combat at Saalfeld where Prince Louis of Prussia was killed. I had often heard him well spoken of, and his death affected me as much as though I had known him personally.

The Battle of Jena dealt Prussia a mortal blow from which she seemed unlikely to recover. The Emperor had accustomed us so thoroughly to the idea of victory that the possibilities of a defeat never entered our minds. Our only anxiety was for the lives of the combatants, our only alarm was the thought of the dangers to which they were exposed. A battle which seemed decisive aroused our enthusiasm because it made us anticipate a speedy end to the conflict. This however was still in the distant future. Every day thousands of prisoners passed through May-

ence and marched by under the windows of my house, which was situated opposite the bridge. I frequently gave them money. They were unfortunate; therefore I considered them as no different from Frenchmen.

We received in a body all the generals and officers belonging to Hesse-Cassel. My mother was so tactful in consoling them for their defeat, in offering them her protection that they almost forgot they were prisoners in the enemy's country. The Princess of Nassau and her daughter came every Sunday to see the Empress, and as our armies advanced the princes from the different occupied territories appeared to ask for my mother's protection. The Princess of Gotha, daughter of the Elector of Hesse-Cassel, was one of those with whom we sympathized most on account of her gentle manner and her father's misfortune.

Among the official reports which reached us several contained uncomplimentary remarks about the Queen of Prussia. We regretted this, and my mother wrote the Emperor in regard to it. He answered that he detested scheming women more than anything else in the world, especially as she (the Empress) had accustomed him to women who were gentle and kind. He told her too how the tears of Madame d'Hatzfeld and her deep emotion had caused him to pardon her husband and that consequently he did not deserve to be called unfair in his treatment of her sex.

At Mayence regiments known as guards of honor[9] were quartered. These regiments were composed of young men belonging to the best and richest families in France who, rather than begin their military career as privates in one of the line regiments, preferred these special corps. The Emperor had placed these regiments under the command of Monsieur de Montmorency-Laval. Marshal Kellermann was in charge of their general organization and appointed the officers from among the recruits themselves. Monsieur de Talleyrand asked me one

day to recommend Monsieur de La Bédoyère, a cousin of Monsieur de Flahaut. What a good reason for me to interest myself in him! I obtained his nomination as second lieutenant, and he came to thank me. The officers were in the habit of calling on the Empress in the evening. I spoke more with Monsieur de La Bédoyère than with the others. The desire to make a good impression on the person one cares about is so natural that unconsciously we are inclined to seek out those who are related to him by ties of birth or affection and who will talk about us to him. We are more anxious to please these relatives perhaps because we feel at ease with them and in speaking to one we think of the other.

Monsieur de La Bédoyère was a highly strung man full of romantic ideas which he concealed under an icy manner. He had enlisted against the wishes of his parents and against his own political conviction. Although hostile to the Emperor he did not consider that this prevented him from entering a career which he considered honorable. His face and figure were strikingly handsome, but his character was unsociable. Detesting society, he had adopted a surly attitude and an abrupt manner of speaking. Women feared rather than admired him. They felt him to be an ironic and severe critic of their behavior. In spite of this he was an admirer of Madame de Staël, with whom he had acted tragedies at Coppet, for he had as fine a diction as Talma himself. Monsieur de La Bédoyère had discovered, thanks to his sense of values, that drawing-room successes do not mean as much as honors gained on the field of glory. He had deserted society in order to play a part in another, sterner and more glorious setting. The talks I had with him were all about idealism and the principles of magnanimity. I never imagined our talks were of a kind calculated to give him a far too flattering opinion of me, an opinion which later interfered with his happiness.

We went to Frankfort for a few days' visit to the Prince-

Primate who gave very fine receptions in our honor. Evening parties, concerts, balls and excursions filled the short time we spent there. I attended a masked ball where the novelty of the scene amused me greatly, but where I felt much embarrassed and did not venture to speak to anyone or leave the arm of my Dutch lady in waiting. All the people had imagined they recognized me and crowded about a lady seated in a chair specially prepared for me. It was one of the Emperor's pages who took my part. This mistake in itself was enough to amuse me.

On our return to Mayence Monsieur de La Bédoyère assured me that he had recognized a woman with a mask with whom he had had a long conversation. If I wished, he could repeat this talk word for word as he had written it all down. He asked to be allowed to present me the account the next day. Curious to know if someone had passed herself off for me I took the paper, and as the incident had taken place at a reception, on my return home I began to read his note aloud to the ladies who were in attendance. It was a love-letter, delicately and tactfully worded but so indiscreet and so flattering that I did not dare believe it intended for me. In this note Monsieur de La Bédoyère declared that for a long time he had dreamed of an ideal being. Life had taught him how rare it is to encounter a woman worthy of one's love. He had followed the ordinary rounds of pleasures, filled with contempt for them and longing to find his ideal. Suddenly when he had given up all hope he discovered this ideal before him exactly as he had imagined her, equally fair, equally kind, equally virtuous. He recognized the extent of his misfortune, he knew how remote from him his vision remained and all that stood between them. Her very moral perfection was a greater obstacle even than her rank. But at least he had beheld the object of his dreams. No longer would his fancy roam idly this way and that, now all his ardor was turned toward a definite goal. She,

who had not been able to conceal her identity beneath a mask, would from now on become his lode-star, the guide of his destiny, the influence that would make him do good and keep him from evil. He desired to have the opportunity to say all that he dared hardly write. Surely she would not take offense as the speaker would be a man about to take his departure, perhaps forever. He ended his letter by begging the person who had asked him to write it to forgive his having done so.

I was extremely embarrassed. I refused to admit that these phrases were meant for me. My name was not mentioned, but all my ladies assured me I was the person referred to. I was the more surprised as Monsieur de La Bédoyère had never said a word that would have made me think he was interested in me. I was also much annoyed at having revealed to strangers sentiments the writer had certainly not intended them to know. To be sure I was not really to blame for I had had no idea of the contents of the letter, but as a matter of principle I believe one cannot be too discreet as regards matters of sentiment, and I was vexed at having disclosed anyone's secret.

I saw Monsieur de La Bédoyère again and made no reference to the matter. He seemed unhappy and ill at ease. I no longer had any doubt as to the identity of his ideal and reproached myself for having been unduly agreeable to him. He had not guessed the motive for my actions, he had misinterpreted them. I had been wrong, and it was necessary for me to remedy my fault and calm the over-enthusiasm of which he might be the victim. I am always prompt in the execution of a plan that seeks to achieve some good purpose. The more difficult it is for me to carry it out, the more I persuade myself it must be done and that I must overcome my natural reluctance which alone prevents. Consequently, on the same evening that I had made up my mind how to act, I approached Monsieur de La Bédoyère and, in the course of our conversation, I uttered the following speech in a firm al-

though somewhat embarrassed voice: "I should deeply regret it if anyone became attached to me. I could not return his affection. I only care for the respect of those who know me, my fate and my feelings have been fixed once and for all, and only misfortune could befall a person who cares for me in the least."

There is a certain inner satisfaction that only can be felt by a highly refined conscience. I was pleased with myself. I believed I had cured a man who was suffering, even though I had been obliged to lessen his good opinion of me. I had, to be sure, sacrificed my vanity to some extent, but I had performed a good deed, and when you feel you have done that, you experience a sense of satisfaction greater than any flattery to your self-esteem.

Meanwhile Monsieur de La Bédoyère left to join the army. When he said good-by to me he was obviously moved. His generally severe manner made his emotion all the more apparent.

About this same time there arrived at Mayence a young man at the point of death. How sad I felt when I discovered that this, too, was my fault. I heard about it through Mademoiselle Cochelet. When in Paris, she often met at the house of one of her mother's friends a Monsieur de Charette de la Colinière, nephew of the famous Charette de la Vendée. He had heard Mademoiselle Cochelet's complimentary remarks about me and listened with interest, making her describe the sorrows of my home-life, of which she was so frequent a witness. She herself had been strongly attracted by this young man, so gifted in mind and so handsome in person that few women dared to go about with him for fear of being stared at. Since the subject interested him she talked frequently of me in order to secure his attention. He never saw me except in the ballroom and never spoke to me, but finally his imagination was fired by hearing me praised so often, and he declared that he loved me. Mademoiselle Cochelet instead of being jealous con-

sidered his feelings quite natural. She had been aware of his sentiments before he knew them himself, felt responsible for having aroused them, and was happy to have them confided to her. The more he talked about me, the more she cared for him. He enlisted in the regiment of La Tour d'Auvergne in the hope of beaing nearer to me, left it when I went to Holland, and under cover of a pleasure trip through that country came there for the purpose of catching a glimpse of me.

He arrived the very day I was leaving for Wiesbaden. The fatigue of the journey and grief at my departure affected his health, which was already delicate. He broke a blood vessel in his chest, returned to Paris spitting blood, but instead of taking care of himself came back to Mayence to take part in the campaign. When he arrived there he was too feeble to go any farther. Mademoiselle Cochelet was overcome with grief to have been the cause of such a tragedy and told me everything. Although I reproached her for having talked so much about me, the harm had been done. I asked her, nevertheless, to say as many disagreeable things regarding me as she had previously said flattering ones.

Mademoiselle Cochelet begged me out of kindness to receive Monsieur de la Charette just once in order to persuade him to return to his family. I did so. I pretended to know nothing about his sentiments towards me and talked entirely about how much Mademoiselle Cochelet cared for him. He showed that he appreciated what she did for him and before he left he ceased to speak of me and asked her to become his wife. His death put an end to this plan. I only heard of it several months later at a time when the intensity of my own grief prevented me from being greatly affected by the news.

It was during this journey that I became better acquainted with Monsieur de Talleyrand. I had often wondered how people could praise his wit and consider him so clever when he so rarely displayed those qualities.

For years I had watched him enter the drawing-room of Malmaison with his careless and distant air. He dragged along his clubfoot, leaned against the first chair he encountered, and barely bowed to the people present. He hardly ever spoke to me. At Mayence, on the other hand, he sought my company and took the trouble to make himself agreeable. I was surprised and even flattered. The attentions of a man who is generally aloof make a special impression. I am convinced that Monsieur de Talleyrand's reputation for cleverness, which I admit he deserves, is less the result of anything remarkable that he *does* than of the little he *says,* but says so well. He is chiefly remarkable for his epigrams, his perfect tact, his great skill in discovering the reasons for other people's actions and concealing his own motives, the self-confidence of a great lord and a natural tolerant indolence, which makes him so easy and agreeable to get on with that people consider it a sign of kindness of heart. He is indulgent toward all forms of vice, and is willing to listen patiently to plans of schemers, especially if their projects have any chance of success. His only comment on what he is told is an approving smile, and he takes care to alarm no one and to exploit success by whomever it has been achieved. The attractive quality of his mind makes up for his lack of moral strength, and he finds himself at the head of a movement which people think he organized when in reality he was hardly even the confidant of those who really started it. His very reputation for possessing great charm, although founded on fact, is largely due to the vanity of those with whom he comes in contact. I myself succumbed to it. The day he condescends to speak to you you are conquered by the fact that he does so, and you are quite prepared to adore him if he merely asks after your health.

Monsieur de Rémusat, who trimmed his sails to every breeze, followed Monsieur de Talleyrand about and, imitating his model, no longer said a word in the hope that

by adopting this pose he might make himself seem important. At Mayence he was said to keep the police informed of what went on in society. He sent reports to Marshal Duroc, and the young ladies did not dare to be seen chatting with young men for fear of providing material for the reports of Monsieur de Rémusat.

I had hoped for an instant to go to Berlin with my mother for the signing of the peace, but the war kept on. My husband left the army of which he was in command and wrote me to return to the Hague. As long as he was in danger I forgot all the harm he had done me, but when I no longer had any reason to feel alarmed on his account, I began to fear for myself. Being accustomed to obey I left Mayence shortly after New Year's Day, 1807. I remember the date because if I had been inclined to believe in premonitions I should have had good reason to be alarmed just then. Every time anyone wished me Happy New Year tears came to my eyes. My present distress was enough to dampen my spirits, and besides that, I was about to leave my mother without knowing when I should see her again. I was returning to a foreign land where no one knew me, where there was no one to protect me. And from whom did I need to be protected? From my husband. In addition to all this, I foresaw, I do not know why, still more trouble in the near future.

I was frightened at my state of mind. "What is going to happen to me this year?" I asked Adèle when I found myself alone with her.

"What can be worse than what you endure?" she replied. "Have you not enough reason to be unhappy without inventing imaginary ones?"

Her common sense impressed me, but sometimes a painful mood continues without any good ground for it.

I left Mayence deeply depressed. The season was bitterly cold. Nevertheless my always delicate health had somewhat improved. I arrived at the Hague a few days after the sad accident at Leyden.[10] My husband on this

occasion had behaved in a manner that had won the admiration of the Dutch. As soon as the news of the explosion reached him, he hastened to the spot, encouraged the rescue-parties, and in order to save those who were injured did not hesitate to expose himself to the danger of being crushed by the tottering walls. My heart ached as I passed through this city. I wished to do my share in helping the unfortunate victims and I gave twenty thousand francs [11] for those who were the most in need. My husband objected but I insisted on doing this.

As a rule, he did much for the poor. Even in Paris he gave large sums, and in Holland his gifts were enormous. If I happened to give someone a fixed income in response to a request for help, I was sure that if he heard of it he would double the amount without being asked. It seemed as though he were trying to efface the impression made by what I had done. I may have been mistaken in thinking this but at any rate I believed it at the time. Consequently, instead of visiting charitable organizations, helping them extend their work, and in general concerning myself with philanthropy as a queen should do, I only went out driving and displayed the most complete indifference to everything that went on in order to give no grounds for my husband's displeasure.

When I arrived at the Hague the King had already been there some time. In the evening my ladies in waiting and the officers of his household were in the habit of meeting in his apartments. There was no formality about these receptions and it was more like a family gathering than a royal court. People played parlor games, and sometimes the fun became even boisterous. As soon as I was back no one was allowed to enter my drawing-room any longer. Everything became serious and impressive and even the simplest gatherings were forbidden. One morning, without any reason being given, all the French who had rooms at the palace received orders to leave at once and secure quarters in town. Not a moment's delay

was allowed, and everyone wondered: "What can have happened last night? What can be the cause of this abrupt and drastic order?"

A little later a still more extraordinary order was issued. From six o'clock on no one was allowed to enter or leave the palace without a card signed by Monsieur Sénégra. Tradespeople were arrested, others thought they would be obliged to spend the night in the halls. Every day there would be misunderstandings and ridiculous situations which people laughed about among themselves and which I heard of only through my young ladies. I could not see the humor in these incidents as they did, for to me they had too serious a meaning. The Dutch thought at first that all these precautions which they could not understand were due to suspicions regarding them, and they were indignant. Later, when they discovered that it was all owing to domestic misunderstandings—a thing which surprised them greatly, for we had arrived with the reputation of being a model couple—they paid no more attention to the new regulations.

As I always considered my husband's obvious jealousy a public insult, I had been much embarrassed by the first appointments he had made in Holland of the members of my household. My equerry was the Baron de Rénesse, a very worthy man who, had he lived in the days of Cervantes, might have served as model for Don Quixote. The chamberlain Monsieur Van der Dun was still more ridiculous in appearance, although with a fine mind. The Frenchmen, who always love a joke, insisted that he looked like a Sancho Panza who had swallowed a jumping-jack. The other members of my household were of the same kind. Of all the handsome Brussels guard of honor who formed part of our escort, and of all the young men belonging to the best families of France, who had asked for posts at our court, the King chose only Monsieur de Marmol, a fine man in everything except looks. These appointments were so arbitrary and so evidently inspired

by my husband's jealousy that they always annoyed me. As my equerries were all of them at least sixty years old I never dared ride fast when I went out on horseback on their account. A Frenchman who was only fifty was not allowed to remain long attached to my household. He was ordered back to his regiment and obliged to leave within twenty-four hours. It was in vain that Monsieur de Caulaincourt, our high chamberlain, intervened, asking that the man be permitted at least to finish his week's service in order not to seem to have been dismissed through some fault of his own. Monsieur de Caulaincourt's intervention was useless. It appeared that in spite of his years the man might have attracted me.

At all the state receptions I went around the room and spoke to everyone. The King told me that I remained standing too long, that it tired him and that it would be enough merely to nod and not stop and speak to those present. At the following reception I obeyed his instructions. To my surprise I saw that he did exactly what he had forbidden me, going up to each person and making a few pleasant remarks. Meanwhile I remained alone standing by the chimney and waiting for him to finish. How can such jealousy be explained?

I had brought my old friend, the wife of Marshal Duroc, with me from Mayence. She returned to France and took Adèle with her. I have already mentioned that the latter was an exception to my husband's universal jealousy and I have spoken of his efforts to gain her esteem. He willingly consented to her marriage with Monsieur de Broc, Grand Marshal of the Palace, who had been in love with her for a long time. Adèle loved her husband but only after she became his bride. She was too intelligent to allow herself to become unduly enthusiastic over the prospect of any marriage, and even after her family had decided that the match was a suitable one, she felt merely grateful for the affection which she knew she aroused.

In France she had had many opportunities to get married. The fact that she was known to be my friend was in itself enough to attract certain ambitious men. I had always refused to consider such suitors. Monsieur de Broc, brave, kind, and upright in character, belonging to a good family, possessing a brilliant social position, and loving her tenderly, was nevertheless not a very romantic figure. He was no hero out of a story book, but I had come to believe that a really kind heart is enough to make one's married life happy. The idea of a marriage which would keep Adèle with me was attractive. How many times afterwards did she speak to me about their peaceful, harmonious union, about her husband's respect for her and his love which almost amounted to idolatry!

"Why could you not have had a husband like mine?" she would say. "I imagined all husbands were more or less like yours in character. I expected jealousy and unkind treatment, and instead I find thoughtfulness and sincere affection. My knowledge of your home-life makes mine seem all the more agreeable. How I should like to give you some scrap of this happiness, which you would so appreciate and which you so well deserve!"

I was delighted that my friend should be happy but did not envy her that happiness of which she was more worthy than anyone I knew. Monsieur de Broc left for Paris to marry her.

After Adèle's departure and that of Madame Duroc my life grew still more dreary.

Till then the presence of my friends had acted as a restraint on my husband. Now there was no reason for him to spare my feelings. He took pleasure in making our discord known and attracted public attention to our domestic difficulties. He came to my part of the palace only at dinner time by the state stairways and went back to his own apartments immediately afterward. He went to the theater alone, gave informal evening concerts, to which my ladies in waiting were invited, but from which

I was excluded. I bore all these strange whims patiently. I endured them in silence as long as they did not become a topic for public gossip. What was I to do now that I had become the victim of his opinions? Even if he tried to be fair and impartial he was obliged, on account of the way in which he had treated me, to believe that I had done wrong in order to justify himself in his own eyes. I should have done the same had I been called upon to judge a woman in the same predicament as that in which I found myself. Was it possible to imagine that a husband deliberately sought to ruin his wife's reputation simply for the satisfaction of besmirching her and without even a shadow of evidence against her? All these thoughts drove me to despair. A prisoner in my palace, I no longer dared receive even the visits of my young ladies in waiting or leave my apartment to go and see one of them if she happened to be ill. A valet who had followed one of the royalist exiles abroad was engaged to wait on me. He always slept in my anteroom and wrote down how many times my young ladies came in to see me. I often noticed that, when bringing in wood for the fire without anyone having ordered him to do so, he would push aside the curtains in front of the windows to see if there were not someone behind them. I pretended not to notice these actions. I knew too well whose orders and instructions he was obeying to wish to have them repeated to me by a servant. Madame de Boubers once found this man hidden in my children's room. She was alarmed on their account and considered it her duty to mention the matter to my husband, who sent him away for a little while.

How often have I, when alone with my children, one on my knees, the other playing beside me, composed some melancholy ballad or wept as I embraced them. The eldest looked at me as though he sympathized with my troubles. In spite of his youth he seemed to understand my grief. His affection for me was beyond words. The

King called him one day to sit beside him, but the little boy would not leave me. I asked him to do so, explaining that his father would be cross with him, but he took my hand and nestled closer to my side. I noticed that my husband looked annoyed. The idea occurred to me to say to the child, "Your father will be cross with *me!*" Immediately he ran to Louis with an eagerness which touched me.

When some visitor in my drawing-room exhibited a talent as a singer and received applause my son would come over to me and say in a low voice: "Please sing too, mama, to show how well you sing." Once when I was overcome with grief I heard him say in a whisper to his brother, who wished to go to his nurse, "Stay with mother. She's crying. She feels badly." These words renewed my courage.

"Here I have my consolation," I exclaimed, pressing them both to my bosom. "God is just; everything on earth has its compensation. My happiness lies in my children. They can never fail me."

At other times such thoughts increased my sadness. "The world will condemn me," I said to myself. "My children are too young to be able to judge for themselves. Some day their affection for me will be tarnished by the evil reports that may be repeated in their presence." This idea increased my sorrow. I did not know what refuge my imagination could find.

Incredible as it may seem I even came to believe that only a surprise attack by the English troops in which I should be taken prisoner would give me a few moments' respite. My favorite walk was along the dunes. From there I could see some large English vessels which were doubtless engaged in the smuggling trade. I left my carriage waiting for me some distance off on the highway. Accompanied only by my ladies in waiting, I approached the sea and seemed to expose myself intentionally, putting myself within the enemy's grasp. I fancied that if I were

captured they would shut me up in a tower but would let me have drawing materials. There at least I should breathe freely. There too my reputation would no longer be attacked, and although separated from my children they would be brought up to love and respect my memory. Such were my fondest hopes, but if I stopped and thought of my children's extreme youth, if I imagined one of them ill and needing my care, then I would banish these mad and foolish ideas and resign myself to my sad fate.

After this life of torment and tears had lasted some time my husband one day came upstairs to see me, a letter from the Emperor in his hand. He was much upset.

"You must have been complaining about me," he said. "This is what my brother writes. How unfortunate I am!"

I read the following reproaches from the Emperor: "I have heard the manner in which you treat your wife. All those about you are scandalized at your conduct. I wish you were as so many men are in Paris. You would be deceived and perhaps be happier. Instead of that I gave you a virtuous wife, and you do not know how to appreciate her."

I returned the letter to my husband, assuring him that I had never complained to anyone and that as a matter of fact he read everything I wrote the Emperor.

"Then it must be the French Ambassador," he insisted angrily. "I shall refuse to receive him any more alone. He shall only be allowed to call with the rest of the diplomatic corps. How unfair people are! To dare to say that I treat you badly. Please write my brother that there is not a word of truth in these reports." I did as he asked and in my letter to the Emperor I found courage to say that I was happy.

By some curious chance the English newspapers a short time later repeated the reproaches the Emperor had made my husband about the way in which he treated me. This would indicate that not all of my husband's secre-

taries were French. I do not know if he appreciated my behavior and my refusal to make public my just cause for complaint. At all events he inflicted a new form of torture on me. One evening he came up the secret stairway that connected his room with mine and gave me to understand that my life and my reputation were in his hands. "I love you," he declared. "You know that. But I am ashamed to be obliged to pass as my wife's discarded lover. Let us set an example of perfect harmony, of complete domestic happiness. Then you will find me again at your knees. But you, on your part, whenever we are in public must give demonstrative signs of your affection for me. A woman's honesty is judged by the degree in which she adores her husband."

"I cannot deceive you," I replied. "I do not know what the outward signs of a wife's love for her husband may be. I shall never behave other than seems suitable to me. As far as my affection for you is concerned you have crushed it. I am far from my country, my family, my friends. You are all I have. Be kind to me and I will love you, but one cannot in a day forget what one has suffered. Be a father to me. I need one. Give me a little sincere affection, and my heart will respond."

I thought my words had touched him, for he exclaimed:

"Ah, Hortense, if you only loved me, you would be perfect. We can still be happy together if you only wish it. I long to be reconciled with you but only on one condition: you must confess to me the wrongs you have committed."

I began to smile. "My goodness," I answered, "if I did not commit any it was not your fault. It was because I enjoyed having a clear conscience."

"I am sure of it," he replied. "Tell me all and I will forgive you."

For an entire month he not only wrote me by day, but he also disturbed my slumbers at night, repeating constantly the same thing. He would come in through a little

door which opened on my alcove and which I had not dared lock for fear of arousing his suspicions, and wake me up suddenly. I found myself obliged to listen to all his lamentations. He became more and more despondent; I did not know what to do. I was so worn out and unstrung that I was obliged to ask him to postpone the rest of the discussion till the following day. He would do so and return with more of the same reproaches.

"You have made me the unhappiest man in all the world," he said. "I firmly wish to be reconciled and know the truth. Otherwise we will separate forever. I am writing my brother that I am prepared to give up everything. I cannot live with a person who makes me suffer so. You will end by killing me and have that on your conscience. It is grief that is making me ill. You are destroying my health."

"What am I to do?" I cried, with tears running down my cheeks. "After all your reproaches if I have done wrong I should admit it. Look at me closely. Truth is something one can see. Do you find in my expression that embarrassment which denotes the criminal?" Nothing could satisfy him.

He adopted another line of conduct and one day came to me in triumph.

"You refuse to confess anything. Very well. I tell you I now know all and have proofs of your guilt."

"That cannot be true," I replied firmly and without pausing to weigh my words. "One cannot have proofs of events which never occurred. If I were guilty, your trick might succeed, but it is disgraceful for you to invent such a tale."

He remained motionless and did not say a word. Nevertheless he kept constantly coming back to the idea that such absolute virtue could not possibly exist. More exhausted than I can say by this constantly renewed persecution, I became like one of those unfortunates who on the rack make a false confession in order to escape further agony. I conceived the idea of making up some story

that would put an end to this state of things and cause my husband to leave me alone. I was only embarrassed as to the name of my accomplice. I could not deliberately inflict my husband's hatred on someone and I wished to choose a person who was no longer alive. Adèle was no longer with me. I confided my plan to Madame de Boubers, who for a long time had been a witness of my misfortunes. She protested against my doing such a thing, and finally made me promise that I would not carry out my plan.

At last my husband, worn out by his useless efforts, appeared one day with a peace-treaty which he wished us to sign. He promised that if I did so he would make me happy; if I refused he would complain of my conduct to the Emperor in the strongest terms. I asked him to leave me this document in order to give me an opportunity to answer each clause separately. Here it is. I have always kept a copy of it.

> We, Louis and Hortense, desire to put an end to the state of mental discomfort and constraint in which we both have been living for a long time and we consider that our mutual enmity since our marriage has been due to the fact that we married before we had come to care for each other. Desiring to find a means by which we may hereafter live happily and profit by the experience of the last five years, we have resolved to observe the resolutions set forth in the present private deed to which we have apposed our signatures. We each of us swear and promise before God to fulfil all the conditions set forth herewith.
>
> Paragraph 1:—It is agreed that all mistakes, errors and faults of whatever nature they may have been which may have been committed by either of us in the past, and which may have been prejudicial to the other, are hereby annulled, forgiven and canceled; and it is forbidden to refer in any way to the unhappy past.
>
> Paragraph 2:—We promise henceforth to cherish

one another, not merely because we are husband and wife but of our own free will, and as though we had chosen each other free from any constraint. We promise not to separate under any pretext nor ask to do so. Should such a request be made, the other party shall refuse to accede to it. We shall prefer each other to any or all members of our respective families. Lastly we shall show both in public and private our mutual love and confidence.

Paragraph 3:—We promise on our honor not to correspond, I, Louis Bonaparte, with any woman, without the Queen's permission and I, Hortense, with any man, without my husband's permission, and this without any further explanation but out of a spirit of reciprocity.

Paragraph 4:—We both promise to unite our efforts and to make common cause to keep the guardianship of our children and not allow them to be adopted by the Emperor or the Empress.

Paragraph 5:—We promise never to disagree in public and to make all our demands on one another when we are alone together.

Paragraph 6:—We solemnly promise on our honor to receive no visitor and to go nowhere ourselves without having informed the other party in this agreement of the fact. And we further promise, I, Louis, not to receive any woman and I, Hortense, not to receive any man or any woman without my husband's permission.

Paragraph 7:—We promise that the arrangement of our apartments and the choice of our attendants shall be such as is mutually agreeable and that nothing shall be done until both parties have agreed upon it. We will examine and discuss together the arrangements that already exist.

Paragraph 8:—We promise to have only one purse, that is to say that Hortense shall have no private funds of her own, and that no correspondence about business matters is to be carried on by the Queen without the King's consent.

FAN PRESENTED TO NAPOLEON
In the Collection of Prince Napoleon

By performing and carrying out the above conditions in a loyal and scrupulous manner we hope to live as respectable and honorable people. And in order to confirm our reconciliation we hereby promise solemnly to live entirely for one another and for our two children.

(Signed) LOUIS.

This is the reply that I wrote in the margin of Louis' contract:

"I cannot sign this agreement because I refuse to deceive you, and it is impossible for me to carry out the points specified in it.

"According to the first paragraph I must forget the wrongs that have been done to me. I can do my best to achieve this, but it is not in a single day that one can wipe out so many years of unhappiness. Moreover my ability to forget the past depends entirely on your behavior towards me. If you show that you admire and trust me it will be possible for me to care for you again.

"As regards paragraph 2 you have not made me so happy that you can take the place of my entire family. The latter consists of the Emperor, whom I have always considered as my father, the Empress and my brother. I shall take advantage of every opportunity that occurs to be near them.

"As for paragraph 3, how can you expect me to write to my family only when you allow me to do so? As far as other persons are concerned I agree readily enough.

"Paragraph 4:—You have the right to appoint and dismiss all the persons who belong to my household. I have never appointed anyone without your approval. But I shall never approve of the dismissal of anyone who has done nothing wrong.

"Paragraph 5:—My hopes and my happiness consist in having my children with me. But God is master of

their fate and it is for Him to decide what that fate shall be.

"Paragraph 6 is easy enough to fulfil.

"Paragraphs 7 and 8 show how little confidence you have in me. It would, however, be easy enough to conform to them, disagreeable as it is to realize that they are prompted by suspicions.

"The above indicates my point of view, which is totally different from yours. If all these discussions are painful it is because they lead nowhere and because I have lost all hope of finding a solution. You demand immediately something that only time can give and especially that frankness and confidence which you have never shown me. Nevertheless you may be sure that whatever may be your behavior toward me my friendship for you will always continue, and that the father of my children can never become indifferent to me.

HORTENSE.

April 16, 1807.

How could the King ask me to make a promise he knew I would not keep? Was it possible for me to declare that I should no longer wish to write to my family, or see my brother if he returned to France? Louis was master of my fate, he could take steps to prevent me from doing these things, but he could not make me consent to his doing so. In spite of this I was forced to submit to all the Emperor's reproaches when he received the letter in which my husband complained that I was making him miserable.

The King was ill for two days. I did not leave his side for a moment. He must have noticed my spontaneous and zealous care. He seemed to be touched by it, but his first expression of tenderness revealed again a desire to find me at fault. The fact that he was unable to do this seemed to embitter him, and I felt that he was saying to himself: "How I could love you and how happy I would

be if only you were guilty!" I was extremely discouraged; all hope of happiness had fled. Thinking to make someone else happy I still persisted in my attempts to achieve this purpose.

How many times have I stifled a complaint or a sigh in order not to shame the man to whom I had vowed obedience! I so wanted to make him happy in spite of his natural melancholy. I struggled to modify his nature and I fed my foolish hopes on my incessant and constantly vain efforts. It was as though I considered that I possessed more than human powers. Then too how often, when aroused by the keenness of my pain and fired by my love for what is good, did I exclaim enthusiastically: "I suffer bitterly. What does that matter? I welcome suffering, for it makes one better."

CHAPTER VII

THE DEATH OF THE PRINCE ROYAL: TRAVELS IN SOUTHERN FRANCE (MAY—AUGUST, 1807)

Illness and Death of the Prince Royal—A Mother's Agony—Change of Scene—The Pyrenees—Lourdes—Pau—Bayonne—Into Spain—Mountain Excursions—Return to Saint Cloud—The Emperor Rebukes Hortense—A Drive with Napoleon and Josephine—The Emperor's Opinion of the Rulers of Prussia and Russia.

ALAS! the moment was at hand when all my energy abandoned me. Not till then did I really know what it was to be unhappy, not yet had I experienced to the full the bitterness of grief, the sharpness of mental anguish. It was my child, my eldest son who had taught me how deeply I could love, who was to teach me these other lessons. My hand trembles as I tell the story and my tears flow while I write.

I was at his bedside with his governess watching him while he slept. His breathing was irregular and oppressed; I could not take my eyes from him. Fear entered my soul. I prayed; I implored Providence to be just.

"My child must not die," I kept repeating. "What sin have I committed? For what offense am I being punished?"

My conscience reassured me. The foremost doctors in Holland were in attendance. My tears might disturb them, so I tried to be calm, to talk about my son's illness as though he were a stranger. I felt that had I been in their place I should have found some remedy. Yet not one of them recognized the disease from which he was suffering. It was the croup. In two days he died.[1] It was toward me that he turned his pale, wasted little face;

it was I whom his lips scarcely able to utter a sound seemed to be calling; it was his mother's name that I saw framed on those discolored lips, and that passed with his last breath. And I survived all this. How can God allow a mother to outlive her child?

Other women, I know, have had sons and have lost them. But they doubtless had their family with them, or some friend, and were comforted and cared for, were relieved of at least a fraction of their despair. I was alone in the world, utterly alone with only my misfortune as companion.

My husband, overcome by his own grief, threw himself at the feet of his son, while I collapsed in so alarming a condition that every effort had to be made to revive me. I had uttered a piercing shriek when I saw that my son was lifeless. I lay in a swoon, as motionless as though I too were dead and yet hearing everything that went on about me. The phrase, uttered by a doctor, "She gives no sign of life," was perhaps what brought me back to it. The hope of death made me resigned to the prospect of the hereafter. I was completely paralyzed and could not speak a word to those who wept beside my bed. My husband hastened to me, his face streaming with tears. He called my name, implored me to keep on living for his sake and to forgive him the sorrows and unfair treatment he had inflicted on me. For the first time in his life he admitted he had done wrong. I remained insensible, no emotion stirred within me. My only thought was the prospect of a speedy death.

"I am about to die," I said to myself. The despair of those about me proved this. It gave me a welcome certitude of my approaching end which comforted me and removed some of the weight of despair beneath which I was crushed. This state lasted several hours. My window was open. The mournful song of the watchmen calling the hours of the night came to my ears. I cannot describe the effect it had on me. I made a movement which

betrayed the fact that I was still alive, but how little I cared for that life. The following day passed, dreary and silent. I could not shed a tear. They brought me the child that was left me. I looked at him, then pushed him away. "I do not want to love anything again on earth." I felt I was about to die and I waited impatiently for the hour to strike. Religion might have succored me, but at that moment I did not respond to any religious sentiment; all those emotions seemed to have been stifled in my heart.

"For what am I being punished? What have I done wrong? Was I not already unhappy enough? I can no longer believe in God, in his kindness or in his justness, but if I die, *then* my faith in Him will be restored," I exclaimed. I added a moment later: "I feel He has set a limit for my sufferings. He is about to reunite me to my son. Now may His name be praised!" I yearned for that moment to come.

None of these thoughts changed my physical condition. My body had lost the power to move, my eyes were always dry and with a fixed stare in them, my features unchanging and expressionless. I was no longer in communication with those about me. I showed no apparent sign of being alive, only my inner life still continued. The doctors recommended that I should travel. I made no objections, for nothing any longer affected me. It had been difficult to make me take any nourishment. A new novel [2] that had just appeared was read aloud to me. Everything was done to distract my attention, which seemed concentrated unremittingly on a single point. The words uttered near me reached my brain but were unable to distract my mind. I had constantly before my eyes the lifeless body of my son and was unable to shed a tear.

Princess Caroline hastened to me from Paris as well as Adèle and her sister, the wife of Marshal Ney. Far from being touched by this token of their affection, I looked at them without saying a word. I knew that they

were my friends, but I had ceased to care for anyone. My mother came to the Château of Laeken to which I was taken. She was overcome with grief at the death of her grandson, yet found courage enough to come and nurse her daughter. In what a state she found me! Much had been hoped from our meeting. It was thought the presence of my beloved mother would produce a beneficial emotion.

On my arrival at the palace of Laeken the Empress in tears rushed forward to meet me. I recognized her perfectly, looked at her, but not a word or sign indicated that I still retained a spark of affection for her. She had not conceived a condition which no remedy could cure; the sight of me filled her with alarm and grief. Doctor Corvisart declared that only the passage of time and change of scene could improve my health and that drugs would kill me. His opinion was followed, and I was surprised to hear my husband approve of it.

"Is it possible he agrees to something that will do me good? It is the first time he has ever done a thing like that." If anything could have moved me it would have been this change in Louis' attitude. That was why when he left me to return to Holland I took his hand and said: "Louis, I feel that I am about to die. I wish to give you the assurance that I forgive you; I die as innocent as the child I have just lost. Wherever he may be I shall be by his side. Do not grieve on my account, for I shall be happy." He begged me to take care of myself, not to give way to such sad premonitions, and left the palace.

My mother took me out for daily walks to visit the neighboring estates. It did not matter to me where we went; I had no preferences, no will of my own. Nevertheless, the presence of many people made me feel noticeably ill at ease. One day we were at one of these estates. The owners paid us a thousand compliments, to which I did not reply a single word. Indeed I felt so annoyed that I took a path that led away from that which the

rest of the gathering were following. Adèle looked for me and found me seated on a bench. I had been there about a quarter of an hour when I heard the notes of a hunting horn. They had an extraordinary effect on me. Till then I had constantly felt as though some enormous weight were stifling me; my breath came in gasps like that of my poor little child. I seemed to feel him gasping in my arms, and my own sufferings reminded me constantly of his last moments. Suddenly the sound of the instrument that echoed in the distance entered my very soul. The emotion it roused in me relaxed my nerves, abundant tears flowed down my cheeks, my senses seemed to revive, but at the same time how keen a sorrow pierced my heart. The pain was so intense that I could not bear the shock. My moral paralysis returned, checking once more all my natural faculties, and it was with a feeling of relief that I exclaimed: "Ah, I am better, I cannot feel anything any more. I suffered so dreadfully." With these words I relapsed into my previous insensibility. I am convinced that music would have restored my nerves to their natural state; but who would have thought to prescribe such a remedy? My brain was extremely clear, not a detail escaped me. I was entirely conscious of my mother's grief; I understood how alarmed she was. It was painful for me not to be able to comfort her, but I had not the strength to overcome my apathy.

We left for Paris. As we passed Saint Denis I was reminded that there lay the remains of my son. My imagination seemed to enjoy all those ideas which would increase my sorrow. I looked at my remaining child. He was pale and delicate; he needed all my care. I was about to leave him and also say farewell to my mother. This separation did not cause me a single pang. My departure took place without my shedding a single tear. I was taken to the Pyrenees.

This trip and two spasms of pain similar to the one I had felt on hearing the hunting horn improved my

health. Yet all my thoughts remained turned toward death. I considered it a gift that Heaven owed me and awaited with a pious resignation that instant of release whose advent I had never expected to try to hasten.

When we arrived at Bagnères, the beautiful valley of Campan did not please me. It was too cheerful. This enchanting landscape was not in keeping with my state of mind. What I needed was stern and wild scenery in harmony with profound grief. Therefore I only stayed a few days at Bagnères. As soon as my arrival became known people from the neighboring towns and peasants from the surrounding country hastened to come and look at me. This curiosity reminded me of my rank, my sad fate and my recent misfortune. My health became worse. I could not breathe and I remained dumb. Only when I could leave my carriage on the highway and, with Adèle, slip away into one of those little valleys which seemed to offer me a refuge from the world and its troubles, only then was I able to forget for a moment where I was and the misfortune that had caused me to travel so far.

Adèle used all her influence to recall my reason, to arouse my attention, by showing me how I could do good to others. This was the surest means of touching my heart. Together we visited the hospitals, but there I found the lot of others preferable to my own. One day a poor woman came to me in tears and begged me to obtain some information regarding her son who was in the army and whom she believed dead. I looked at her with sympathy. I did what she wanted me to, but I exclaimed, "She is happier than I. She at least has some hope." I gave orders that she was to be given all the money we had with us; she seemed so pleased that I sincerely envied her lot and her poverty, since there was something in the world that could console her.

In one of my excursions, when I was some distance away from any human habitation, I caught sight of a young man and a young girl coming down the mountain-

side. They stopped, and we asked them some questions. I inquired if they were married.

"No," replied the young man, looking earnestly at his companion. "I wish we were. She always tells me to come and see her at the chalet, but will never consent to marry me."

I wished to find out the reason and asked if they loved one another. If it was a question of money that prevented their union I would undertake to remove this obstacle. I had them take me to see their parents. The young man did so reluctantly. I obliged him to act as interpreter when I spoke to his family, who only spoke the native dialect. My questions seemed to embarrass them all. They finally declared that the marriage could not take place because the father would not give his consent. Try as I might to discover the reason I could not do so. The young man offered me milk at his cottage. I heard a child crying as a woman held it in her arms. This sight touched me, and some tears still further relieved my feelings. The young peasant was no longer smiling. His expression had something sad about it. He looked at me with an air that was uncomfortable and sympathetic at the same time. When I left I gave him some napoleons which at first he refused to accept. At the same time I told him that he still had a chance to make up his mind. I was not leaving the neighborhood till two days later and I would provide the dowry if the marriage took place.

The following day while I was out walking with my entire household, Jacques (that was the young peasant's name) came up to me. He was trembling.

"Madame," he said, "I have come to ask your pardon. I deceived you. I am already married. It so often happens that rich city folk come to our mountainside and amuse themselves at our expense that I thought you were like that. I thought you were making fun of us poor country people and I told you a story that was not true.

The child you heard crying and which you saw in its mother's arms is my child. So I could not accept your gifts, but when I saw your tears I understood that you really meant to be kind to us, and I was sorry for what I had done. To deceive a woman as good as you are must be a sin. I could not sleep all night. This morning I went to the priest. I confessed everything and relieved my conscience. He told me to come and see you and beg your pardon. I hear you are a queen and that you can have me put in prison. That doesn't matter. I feel that I had to tell you the truth."

I was touched by Jacques' frankness. I complimented him on the fact that having done wrong he knew how to make amends. One must always appreciate the rare courage it takes to admit having done wrong. The memory of this little incident has often helped me understand how greatly the pride of fashionable people hampers their force of character. The innocent conscience of this untutored peasant boy had instinctively shown him how to act, as surely as social training or intellectual brilliancy might have done.

I went on to Cauterets,[3] where the mountains, crowding closer together as they increase in height, make the landscape more imposing and at the same time more rugged. I liked the sound of roaring streams dashing continually past my house, for a mind haunted by the thought of death enjoys the presence of destructive forces. That was why I sought continually to approach nearer to these awful chasms. I feared to be followed by my equerries or chamberlain, whose presence would have disturbed me, and I would slip away from them. Taking Adèle's arm I would disappear down the most difficult and dangerous pathways.

How often did I take delight in visiting those humble cottages, which seemed to me a refuge of happiness. How often too when the lateness of the hour compelled me to hurry back did I pick my way across perilous tor-

rents. The round, wet trunk of a tree served as my bridge. I had to place my feet crossways, one in front of the other, in order to reach the opposite side. The thunder of the rushing waters as they dashed down into an abyss on whose brink we stood might make us dizzy, but it could not alarm me. Only when I looked back would I be surprised at my own temerity and at the same time rejoice not to have seen some easy comfortable bridge a little farther up-stream, because the moment of danger had for an instant taken my mind off my affliction. Who would have believed that a few years later, among other mountains, another expedition far less dangerous would cost me so dearly, and cast over my life the shadow of an eternal sorrow.[4]

The officers belonging to my household were very much worried about my excursions, both on the ground of court etiquette and of my personal health, which, they explained, they were supposed to safeguard. They complained openly about the pains I took to avoid their company and the way I went off alone with Madame de Broc. I yielded to their wishes and deserved credit for doing so, as whenever I found myself surrounded by people I felt physically ill at ease.

My Dutch equerry had several bad falls because he insisted on following me over paths that were too difficult for him at his age, and I decided to send him back to Holland, for he would have ended by killing himself on these mountain roads. I only kept with me Monsieur de Villeneuve and Monsieur de Boucheporn.

I was touched by the letters my husband wrote me. His grief seemed to equal mine.

For the first time we understood one another. He was worried about my health and thought it unfortunate that he could find no way to improve it. He did not dare to come to see me, and I was affected by his attitude. He had caused me so much pain that presumably he did not believe he could prove a consolation for me. I wrote

him in a friendly manner, for I had sincerely pardoned his past faults. He kept repeating to me that in the last two months he had come to see life from a different angle, that he was anxious to make me happy, that the torments he had suffered previous to our misfortune when we were living side by side were what had made him wish to find me guilty of some fault so as to have the right to ask for a separation, but that now it was I, and I only, who could give him the necessary courage to perform his various duties. In the end I was touched. I believed his statements. Nevertheless, I replied that as far as happiness was concerned I was not sure whether I could give him that. As for courage I had none of my own. This was the truth.

Impatient at having been left alone for such a long time Louis finally came to the Pyrenees and spent a few days at Cauterets. I was wholly absorbed by my grief. My husband wished to be kind and attentive, but all the defects of his nature came to the surface in spite of his efforts. I trembled at the thought of having again to suffer from his behavior, and this terror was the first thing to take my mind off my loss. Another reason for my alarm was the fact that I did not feel strong enough to sacrifice myself to his pleasure. Adèle encouraged me. She tried to persuade me that our common sorrow had altered my husband's character and that I should try again to make him happy. I felt that to do so would take time. For the present I was absorbed in gloomy thoughts and I had not as yet found anything that tempted me back to every-day life. The King realized that I was still too ill to think about anything except the loss we had so recently suffered. He went to another watering-place in the Pyrenees, from which he wrote me frequently. His only wish was to effect a reconciliation between us. He declared he would be overjoyed if I would consent to such an arrangement.

Some days his letters would be affectionate; on other

occasions he insisted on two things as being essential to his peace of mind. One was that after our reconciliation, in order to be an example of all domestic virtues, I should never speak in a familiar manner (*tutoyer*) to my young ladies with whom I had been brought up; the other was that I should never receive anyone in my private apartments. These conditions amazed me. For one thing, as I have already said, only women waited on me in my own rooms. As for speaking familiarly to my young ladies, it was a habit I had formed at boarding-school and had kept up intentionally in view of my rank, which placed me so far above my companions. I should have felt I was behaving in an unduly haughty manner if I had changed in any way my attitude toward them. I considered the title of Queen, which had happened to fall to me, entailed only an obligation to do more for others and protect them. Indeed I made every effort to prove that I had some personal merit of my own, to make people forget my rank and to gain that affection which is generally bestowed only on those whom we consider our equals in every respect. I was surprised at the importance my husband attached to such a trifle. His attitude seemed to reveal those traits which I already knew only too well, for instance his habit of taking offense at the least thing when he could not find serious cause for alarm. How was it possible to believe I could make him happy in my present state of mind and body, since I had failed to do so in the days when I had all my health and strength. "But I must do my duty to the bitter end," I said to myself. "I do not want to have anything to blame myself for, and perhaps new sorrows will hasten my death."

I had received two letters written by the Emperor while at the front. In them he reproached me for my grief, complained of my silence and spoke of the sorrow my condition caused my mother. His victories and the conference at Tilsit having ended the war he returned to

France and pardoned his brother Jerome whom he was about to marry to the Princess of Würtemberg. The idea of going out into society was intensely disagreeable to me, and I decided instead to make a little trip as far as the Spanish border since it was so near.

As I enjoyed traveling incognito, in order to be able to do as I pleased, I left Cauterets on horseback in the direction of a distant valley. My only companions were Madame de Broc, Monsieur de Boucheporn, an elderly man who was governor of the palace, and a mounted servant who carried our provisions. Having visited the delightful valley of Azun, at one end of which is situated a chapel that much to the regret of the peasants had been closed for a long while and which I managed to have reopened in memory of my son, I began my journey toward Spain instead of returning to Cauterets. My first night was to be spent at Lourdes. On arriving near the town I made a detour and entered by the Porte de Paris in order that no one might suspect I was coming from Cauterets.

While supper was being prepared I went for a walk with Madame de Broc. Many of the townspeople were sitting outside their doors. I joined one such group, was offered a chair and found myself taking part in the conversation. After asking many questions as to where I came from and where I was going, my neighbors began talking of the Queen of Holland, who was taking the waters at Cauterets. They spoke favorably of her, and I was pleased at hearing myself praised by these good folk who thought I was many miles away. The next morning I set out for the charming city of Pau. We left all our riding-horses at Lourdes with the exception of mine. This horse was attached to a small cart which we hired and which my courier drove. The bumping of this badly hung vehicle gave me a rather violent pain in my chest. I had my horse saddled and remounted, riding behind the wagonette in which Madame de Broc had

remained. Occasionally I would stop on purpose to lose sight of it. For the first time in my life I thus found myself alone on a highway. What was there to remind me of the fact that I was a queen, a queen with courtiers, a queen whom people envied no doubt and yet who was so unhappy? I forgot all this. For a moment I made myself believe that freed from all the bondage of my station I was traveling as I pleased. For an instant I felt that I had laid aside the crown and with it my troubles and my sorrows. I breathed the pure, clear air with an intense enjoyment, and when the carriage stopped to wait for me I galloped up to it in order to reassure my traveling companions and beg them not to worry about my safety. Then once more I would remain alone in order to dream of peace and liberty.

A young peasant woman, clad in the becoming costume of the country and riding on a donkey, was taking the same route we were. She and I rode along side by side chatting with one another. She was on her way to market. Her talk was all about matters which seemed important to her. The more ordinary and commonplace these matters were the more I enjoyed hearing about them. I tried to catch her point of view completely. Our inner sorrows instead of limiting the circle of our sympathies develop them and cause us to take a more active and compassionate interest in what goes on about us. We stopped at the abbey of Betharam, and Adèle and I made a sketch of it. We lunched quietly beside the dashing stream. Afterwards I visited the castle of Coarraze, famous as the place where Henry IV spent his childhood. These excursions took my mind off my troubles. I felt that I was living on another planet. This method of traveling, which was so new to me, caused me to forget for a moment my sorrows.

As we neared Pau I feared that the sight of a woman riding astride might attract too much attention in a provincial town and I was not at all anxious to be recog-

nized by the préfet, the Marquis de Castellane. The latter was a clever man but lacked tact and would have been extremely vexed at the idea that I was in his department without his having been informed of the fact. His memories of the former days at court made him believe himself still irresistible. Although far from young he retained the weaknesses and pretentiousness of youth and thought he had also preserved its charms. I had received the préfet at Cauterets. He was delighted with our household. Surrounded by five young ladies, he had displayed all his airs and graces, and imagined himself fascinating when he was merely being ridiculous. We had only desired to be left alone to avoid attracting attention. Instead, the préfet had made us conspicuous by spending his time in the main streets of his capital specially training a horse for me to ride. He had urged me to visit the surroundings of Pau and intended to accompany me everywhere. The yacht belonging to the fleet would come for me, but my incognito, he declared, would be respected. In view of the way he behaved this seemed very doubtful, and I determined to make my excursions alone.

In order to do so I had to take pains to avoid a wound to his sensibilities, which would have been keen had he learned that I was at Pau. Consequently by an excess of precaution my horse was unsaddled and attached to the back of our carriage in which I sat beside my companions. As we entered the city the first person we caught sight of was the préfet in full regalia on his way to attend a dinner. Fortunately he did not deign to notice us. Our terror was inexpressible. On arriving at the inn we asked for a guide to take us through the château of Henry IV. Afterwards, sitting on a bench in the delightful park close to the city, we made a sketch of the building.

This lovely landscape, the memories of this monarch whose soul was so noble and generous had combined slightly to dissipate and calm my grief. But on our re-

turn to the inn I picked up a newspaper. It contained an account of the reception of my son's body at Notre Dame.[5] I was deeply moved, but at least now I was able to weep. My friend, I may add, was glad to see my tears, the only way in which I could relieve my feelings. Consequently she watched me without saying a word for fear of checking their beneficent flow.

That evening the préfet, having learned in some manner which I cannot explain that I was in the city, called, deeply grieved at not having been notified in advance, and wished me to lay aside my incognito. I had the greatest difficulty to make him grasp that what I wanted was to be left alone. I did not tell him the purpose of my trip or even my actual destination. He believed I was returning the next morning to Cauterets, instead of which I continued on to Bayonne. My luggage consisted of three bags and saddles piled into a hired carriage. At the inn our reception was by no means a warm one. The best suite was reserved for a Spanish general, and the accommodations offered us were extremely second-rate. Presumably they were quite good enough for people arriving in such a shabby vehicle. The worse my reception the better I was pleased, and I was delighted with what would have annoyed anybody else.

When I stopped to think of the unconventional manner in which I was behaving I dreaded the Emperor's reproaches if he heard about my trip, for a family agreement forbade us leaving France without his permission, and I intended to go on and see a Spanish city. It was the need of occupying my thoughts and escaping introspection that caused me to violate this agreement. I was so happy when, alone with Adèle, whose arm I always took, and followed only by Monsieur de Boucheporn I walked along a street without anyone turning to stare at me, or when, during my walks, for the first time in my life I found myself jostled by the crowd. I forgot who I was, I forgot my torments and my misfortunes; and I

felt an inner satisfaction comparable with the aspect of one of those spring mornings on which all nature seems to revive, when it seems good to be alive, and when without analyzing one's feelings one enjoys them because they are agreeable. The momentary freedom from any constraint was enough to make me happy.

I went to visit the village of Biarritz and its love-grotto.[6] I also made a boating trip. We had asked a young man who was studying for the navy to take us for a sail. He took us out in a tiny vessel, and we feared we should be drowned as we crossed the bar.[7] Fortunately a senior pilot who was on his way back to shore after steering a frigate through this difficult passage called to us to return. Our crew made fun of his warnings and declared he was trying to make himself seem important. The young skipper however became nervous as we continued to approach this danger-spot where the current of the Adour, the tides, and doubtless the rocks produce waves that are enough to swamp any small vessel. The talent of a pilot consists in knowing how to take advantage of the current. Our helmsman began to lose his assurance. He was only an ordinary seaman. The honor of being placed in command had appealed to him, but his inexperience now frightened him. Adèle, prudent and wise as always, begged me to return for her sake. She was aware of the uneasiness of our crew although they were unwilling to admit it. Another instant and it might have been too late. I thought of my companions, for as far as I was concerned this danger and peril pleased me. But could I expose the life of my dear friend? I yielded to her prayers and afterwards regretted I had done so. When we had disembarked the older pilot told us that we were far too many people for such a small craft and that we should certainly have been drowned if we had persisted in trying to cross the reef. I later sent him a watch without his ever knowing what he had done to deserve it.

I left for Spain in an old-fashioned carriage that might have dated from the days of the Goths. It was drawn by six mules. At Irun I was astonished to note the difference that existed between the two countries which lie side by side. Their frontiers are more clearly defined by the customs of the inhabitants than by the Bidassoa River. I had never seen a priest wearing his robes walk about in the streets. In Spain the entire population seemed to live as though they were inside a monastery. I hired riding-horses at Irun and made my way by bridle-paths to the port of Passajes, one of the most beautiful sites in the world. Everywhere I went I made sketches, everywhere I visited the churches. In one chapel I caught sight of a woman prostrating herself with the greatest abandon. I could not yet understand this perpetual adoration of the Divinity or even this need of communicating with Him by vague prayers having no particular object. Such complete humility seemed to me to be a sign of remorse. I looked at the woman with sympathy and pity.

"She must have committed some great sin," I said to Adèle. "Poor woman, she is more to be pitied than I."

Another time I saw an old crone who looked so wretchedly poor I was convinced she must be asking God to bestow alms on her. I gave her money and felt that my surmise was correct when, instead of thanking me, she again fell on her knees praising God for having answered her prayer. Certain now that I had interpreted her supplications correctly, I gave all the money I had with me and in doing so experienced once more a feeling of true contentment.

I went to visit a monastery of Capuchin monks, believing that we should be admitted. They all came to examine us, but we were not allowed to cross the threshold. I was no more fortunate when we stopped at the nunnery of a very severe religious order. In spite of our riding-habits they all asked us if we were not French nuns whom the Revolution had driven from our own country. Prob-

ably this was because it was difficult for them otherwise to understand the interest we displayed, which must have seemed extraordinary.

At San Sebastian I visited all the points of interest. I climbed up to the fort, from which one has a view of the two greatest beauties of nature, the sea and the hills. I had expected to return the same day to Bayonne, but the tide which leaves the port of Passajes nearly dry prevented me from doing so, and I was obliged to spend the night at San Sebastian. I was terrified at the idea that I might be recognized. Suddenly, martial music was heard, and a crowd appeared, accompanying a number of people bearing transparencies. My terror increased. I was already prepared to deny my name and rank. Fortunately the procession moved on. It was the evening parade of a regiment stationed in the town, and a ceremony always carried out with much pomp. The next day in spite of the fact that it was raining I remounted my horse and returned by the road along which I had come. Hardly had my departure taken place when a messenger brought the news of my visit and an order to receive me with the proper ceremony. I escaped all this fuss by scarcely an hour and was delighted to have done so.

We continued our journey accompanied only by the men from whom we had hired the horses at Irun. As we were entering a wood one of these men, speaking in rather bad French, indicated a bridge from which a few days before the robbers who infested the region had thrown the body of a traveler whom they had murdered.

"Did this take place at night?" I inquired.

"No, indeed, in broad daylight," he replied. "Brigands are so numerous that the authorities are obliged to employ regiments of the regular army against them. Even that does not prevent many murders being committed."

Hearing this I understood for the first time how imprudent I had been in undertaking this trip. Monsieur

de Boucheporn, who had not dared to oppose my wishes in the matter, considered himself responsible for my safety, and he was so much worried that he had not said a word since we started. I looked at him. He was pale and seemed as suspicious of the men who accompanied us as of the robbers of whom they spoke. It is true that the looks of our companions were far from reassuring and that the money they saw us constantly distributing to the poor might have suggested to them the idea of robbing us.

I silently glanced at this lonely wood, at these sinister faces. I allowed my horse to go as he pleased. Suddenly he took it into his head to pick a quarrel with the steed of one of the mule-drivers. The two animals reared and plunged, and my steed threw me to the ground. I felt myself in a dangerous position. Fortunately I let go the bridle of my horse, or I should have pulled him down on me. Madame de Broc and Monsieur de Boucheporn were alarmed. I hastened to assure them I was not hurt or shaken. The only thing that worried me was their terror. I remounted my "fiery charger" and arrived at Fuenterrabia, where I made some more sketches and again found my large wagon drawn by mules, which took me back at an incredible speed to Bayonne. I noticed that at the inn my reception was a more cordial one. The Spanish general who had betrayed my incognito at San Sebastian was waiting on the stairway to see me pass. The innkeeper presented himself and apologized for having offered us such poor accommodations before. I saw there was nothing to be done but to leave. The linen we had left behind when going to take a bath was marked with an H and a crown. This in itself was enough to disclose our secret.

Monsieur de Castellane, who continued to dog our footsteps, had sent his secretary as far as Bayonne to find out whether it were possible that I could continue to get along without his services. In this way he had betrayed

my identity. When I returned by way of Pau I made it plain to the préfet how greatly his behavior had displeased me. I was aware of the honors due my rank, but, as I told him, I had hoped he would have sufficient good taste to overlook them in accordance with my wishes. However, on account of his vanity and the fact that he had boasted so much about receiving me at his house and accompanying me wherever I went, he was vexed at having been put in the wrong. He tried awkwardly to excuse himself but continued to dislike me for, as he put it, having placed him in an awkward position.

The préfet of Tarbes, who had not attended the former royal court as Monsieur de Castellane had done, was far more discreet and I was thoroughly satisfied with the way in which he treated me. My husband was waiting for me at Toulouse to take me back with him to Paris. I was enjoying my informal excursion so much that I asked him to go on ahead and allow me to remain a little while longer in my dear mountains. I would meet him again in Paris. While waiting for his reply I wished to visit the waterfall at Gavarnie and the springs at Barèges. Hearing I was about to leave, the two préfets appeared. Monsieur de Castellane brought me the horse he had had specially trained for my use. The Saint-Simon family also wished to accompany me. I did not like the idea of admiring the beauties of nature surrounded by all these people. Not wishing to offend anyone I sent all my household to accompany them along the usual road and promised to meet them at the waterfall. I myself left at three o'clock in the morning [8] with Madame de Broc, Monsieur Thiénon, a painter attached to my husband's household, a guide who declared he could show us the way over the pass as he had crossed it when hunting bear, izard or chamois, and eight or ten men who though born in the neighborhood had never yet made such a climb. We crossed the Vignemale glaciers. The difficulties proved greater than I had expected. Imagine inacces-

sible rocks, a mountainside so precipitous as to take your breath away at every step. Nowhere was there the least sign of vegetation, nowhere an indication that a human foot had before trod the soil on which you were standing. Eternal masses of ice gleamed at the bottom of crevasses which yawned on every hand. After so much effort the view from the top of the peak is not worth one's labor. All one sees is thousands of other peaks, the Brèche de Roland and the Cirque de Gavarnie far beneath you. The only satisfaction to one's pride is the thought that not everyone could have made the climb. I was astonished at having undertaken so arduous a task simply to escape the companionship and conventional chatter of two préfets. On our way down we slid along with our crampons over the ice, but felt it often crack under our weight. The torrent lay beneath us. It was necessary to leave this icy valley and return by way of another in which we were frequently obliged to employ ropes to pull ourselves up over the rocks. Our guides called to each other as soon as one of them had discovered a possible passageway.

I stopped a moment and said to Adèle, "Does it not seem as though we were breaking out of some dreadful prison and escaping at the risk of our lives?" She agreed but appeared so exhausted that I felt alarmed. At the same time I caught sight of the painter whom I had taken along, thinking he would enjoy the beauties of nature. He was in a truly pitiable condition and obliged to lean for support on two of our mountaineers. Fatigue and discouragement were stamped on his countenance.

"Madame," he said, "rather than undertake again this trip I should prefer to be shot on the spot." As for me, my nervous energy was simply incredible, but many worries physical and mental were in the near future to destroy a health which had seemed unalterable.

The moment we again caught sight of green vegetation was an instant of real rejoicing. We arrived at six o'clock

in the evening at the inn [9] at Gavarnie. The painter went to bed. I made two or three more sketches, and in the evening walked about in the little village, and stopped to watch a man who was preparing a display of fireworks to be held in my honor. I was delighted to have escaped these so-called "festivities," and my pleasure in having done so rewarded me for the fatigue I had undergone. The following day I admired, still without any escort, the waterfall at Gavarnie, situated in the midst of an admirable natural amphitheater. I left the spot when the rest of the party arrived, but decided to wait for them before having supper at Saint-Sauveur. Although as usual the presence of a number of people made me feel unwell, I overcame my faintness. After laying the cornerstone of the bridge across the Gave which still bears my name, I went the next day from Saint-Sauveur again to Cauterets across the mountain. I left at daybreak with Madame de Broc while all the officials were still asleep, a crime for which doubtless they never forgave me. They were not altogether wrong. One should bear the inconvenience of one's station in life. But perhaps my need for quiet and solitude was a sufficient excuse for my conduct.

On arriving at Cauterets I received word that my husband would not return to Paris without me and that he was expecting me at Toulouse as soon as possible. I left these Pyrenees, which I had come to love both on account of the sorrow I had suffered there and the solace that nature had offered me. From a farm [10] which had been named after me I caught a glimpse between two rocks of the vast plain, which represented to me the outer world. I congratulated myself on having been able to escape from it, and felt that in these high altitudes I had been able to come closer to God and to that child whose loss I mourned.

Nevertheless I was obliged to reenter that outer world. My fate would not allow me to do otherwise. I accepted

that fate, but not without regret. How little was I yet able to resign myself to what had to be! My husband insisted upon a reconciliation. I could no longer refuse, but I dreaded all the pain, which I lacked the strength to endure. As encouragement I kept repeating over and over to myself: "In order to die sooner I must suffer even more. At any rate I shall have performed my duties to the end."

I could not succeed in concealing from my husband a sort of fear and even a physical repulsion I felt at our reunion. He desired it so ardently and seemed so pleased that our reconciliation took place at Toulouse.[11]

We traveled back to Paris by very short stages through southern France. Our only companions were Madame de Broc and Monsieur Lasserre, our physician. We maintained the strictest incognito, this allowing us to see all the points of interest in the different towns through which we passed. At Montpellier where I happened to be on Sunday I was amazed to see a crowd of young men, wearing white robes and hoods, going in and out of the church without any appearance of reverence or even ordinary restraint in their manner. I was placed in a quiet corner of the building with Madame de Broc. The young men noticed our presence, and all eyes were fixed on us with so much attention that we felt embarrassed and rather scandalized, especially by the thought that priests could so forget their sacred mission. Later that evening the archbishop told me all these young men were laymen, members of a brotherhood of White Penitents, who paid so much attention to the pomp of their own services that those of the main church suffered. Hearing this I was no longer so surprised at the indiscreet way in which we had been examined, but found it curious that these young men should have chosen this particular form of amusement.

I visited the College of Sorèze and the pool of Saint-Ferréol where two streams flow in different directions

NAPOLEON
Drawing by Queen Hortense in
the Collection of Princesse de la Moskowa

and form that Canal du Midi which unites the two seas. At Nîmes I admired in detail some architectural remnants of the Roman occupation. At Avignon I was shown the spot on which so many atrocities were committed during the Revolution. Here was a new reason to be grateful to the Emperor for having put an end to so much civil turmoil. I wished to see the fountain of Vaucluse. While my husband amused himself composing verses and carving them on trees which bordered the stream I approached close to its not very impressive abyss and was seized with some inexpressible terror when I drank the waters. Was it because this fountain had witnessed the ecstasies and inspired the lyricism of an especially sensitive soul? Was it some memory of those fabled fountains which possessed the power of troubling even the most unblemished mind? I cannot tell the cause, I can only describe what I felt. In those spots where others have loved ardently one's heart is conscious of its capacity to experience passion and fears it all the more keenly. Mine, when I penetrated beneath its surface, showed me that there was still much to be done before I really destroyed what I flattered myself had been crushed long ago.

Leaving the lonely shades of Vaucluse, which after the Pyrenees are not remarkable except as they recall the memories of Laura and Petrarch, we arrived in a little town in which the inhabitants recognized us. The crowd unhitched our horses and dragged us through the streets with all that enthusiasm which is characteristic of southern races. Who would have dared predict that in that same country, so enthusiastic towards the Empire, only a few years later a Marshal of France would be assassinated and the life of the Emperor be in danger? That is what the favor of the mob amounts to, and yet it is the crowd that knows best how to acclaim its favorites.

Fortunately the ovation of which we were the object did not last long. Nevertheless it was almost necessary

to use force in order to regain our freedom. Farther along the route we passed unrecognized. But at every town where I remembered that one of my former schoolmates was living I had her informed of my presence and felt delighted at this opportunity of catching a glimpse of my old friends.

We had only gone as far as Lyons, and already I felt I could scarcely continue to endure the fatigue. It was in August. The heat exhausted me extremely, and my husband's indifference to my comfort proved that there was not much improvement to be hoped for on my return home. The love he declared he felt for me did not seem compatible with his lack of attention. Consequently, instead of gaining courage, I felt it ebbing from me more and more. One day our carriage broke down, and we were nearly hurled over a precipice. I remained inside without becoming excited and exclaimed, "Ah, at last the moment has arrived." But nothing happened and we escaped this peril. On another occasion we were overtaken by a terrific storm. The lightning was so violent and so continuous that we feared it might blind us. We were in the very heart of the storm. I thought how welcome death would be and awaited in joyful anticipation the bolt that would bring me that blessing. How unhappy one must be, and how utterly wretched one must feel, to arrive at such a state of self-abandonment, opposed to all the laws of nature! But soon I was to experience vastly different emotions.

We arrived at Saint Cloud after nightfall. The court was attending a theatrical performance. My mother left it in order to come and greet me. My son was brought to me fast asleep. I pressed him to my bosom, and the feeling I had on being again among these beings who were so dear to me showed me I had recovered all my capacity for emotion. I wept bitter tears when the Emperor entered the room.

"Ah, there you are!" he exclaimed joyfully. After em-

bracing me he noticed my tears. "What's the meaning of this? You must stop behaving so childishly. You have cried long enough over your son. Do you want to be like a 'Nina'[12] of maternal devotion? You are not the only woman who has suffered such a loss, but other mothers are braver than you are. Especially when they still have children to love and when they, like you, have duties to perform. Your child needs you, your kingdom is begging you to return and you are saddening your mother's heart. I admit that I have not found you as brave as I expected you would be. What an idea to go off mountain-climbing instead of remaining with your mother and your son! You have been unjust to them in seeking elsewhere consolation for your grief. If I had been here I would not have tolerated such behavior. But now you are back, smile, be gay, indulge in the amusements of youth, and don't let me see a single tear."

He left the room after having delivered this lecture, not guessing for an instant how deeply his words had wounded me. It was true that the flow of my tears ceased, but in their place came a feeling a thousand times more painful.

"Can this be what people call the kindness of the Emperor?" I said to my mother. "I thought of him as being more considerate. It is easy to see he does not know in the least what maternal affection is. Heavens, how can he reproach me for weeping? I scarcely cried at all and if he does not understand my very natural emotion in finding myself once more in the midst of you all, it must be because his heart is shut to all natural human feelings. Is it possible that he does not understand them at all? I admit the sight of my sorrow may displease him. Therefore I do not seek to remain here. Let me go away."

My mother sought to quiet me. "You do not understand the Emperor's nature," she said. "He believes you increase your grief by giving way to it unrestrainedly.

He had told me in advance that he would speak severely to you because he considered that was the only way you could be cured. But you may be sure he shares your sorrow. He speaks of it very often to me, and his cold attitude toward you was prompted solely by his interest in your welfare."

My mother succeeded in diminishing slightly the effect the Emperor's words had produced. But for a long time afterwards I felt a terror and general sensation of discomfort come over me every time he entered a drawing-room in which I happened to be. I could not bring myself to speak to him, and yet I must admit he showed himself most considerate toward me. When the time came for his daily drive, on which only my mother accompanied him, he would invite me to go with them and would speak on topics which he knew interested me, such as, for instance, the establishment of the girls' school at Écouen [for the daughters of the officers of the Legion of Honor], which was to be directed by Madame Campan. He appointed me in advance the guardian princess of this institution and went into the details of his plans in connection with it—a thing he rarely or never did. Another time the Emperor described his interview with the Emperor Alexander at Tilsit. "He is a charming young man," he would always say at the end, "and I like him very much. As for the Queen of Prussia she is handsome, pleasant in manner but rather affected, and," he added, turning towards my mother and giving her a kiss, "she does not compare with my Josephine."

The Empress, who was aware of his efforts to amuse me, asked him questions in order to make him keep up the conversation.

She often asked him what the King of Prussia was like. He gave a detailed and rather favorable portrait of this monarch. "As far as his tact is concerned," he went on, "what do you think of a prince who tells me when I have just annexed the province of Silesia from him, the well-

known anecdote of how Frederick the Great wished to take his battledore away from him when he was a child and he refused obstinately to give it up, causing his uncle to remark, 'At least I am glad to see that no one will ever make you give up Silesia'?

"To be sure the King was in an awkward position," the Emperor continued, "and therefore he should have been particularly careful and dignified in his behavior. One day I was tracing out on a map spread in front of me how the territory was to be divided. Whenever he felt that Prussia was not receiving her due deserts he would tip back in his chair and kick the bottom of the table saying, 'How about me? Is anything at all going to be left over for me?' He also displayed a little too clearly his jealousy regarding the Emperor Alexander's attentions to the Queen. I once went riding with the two rulers. Alexander had gone on ahead to catch up with the Queen. The King of Prussia was unable to conceal his uneasiness. He kept glancing about in all directions and exclaimed, 'Where can the Emperor of Russia be? He seems to have lost us.' While I, in a brotherly spirit, replied that he had been there a moment before and that he could not be far away."

In speaking of the Queen of Prussia the Emperor acknowledged her beauty, but he had not approved of her attitude as ruler of a country whose territories had been invaded. He considered that she made too great an effort to be agreeable, that she paid too much attention to her personal appearance, an attitude which revealed a lack of good taste. He claimed that under similar distressing circumstances a French princess would have been well gowned but without any show of ostentation.

As for the King of Saxony the Emperor considered him the best and most virtuous of men.

CHAPTER VIII

LIFE AT THE EMPEROR'S COURT--THE BIRTH OF NAPOLEON III (SEPTEMBER, 1807—MARCH, 1808)

At the Saint Cloud Fair—A Startling Talk with Napoleon—Fouché Suggests a Divorce to Josephine—The Marriage of the Duc d'Arenberg —The Surgeon of King Louis—Birth of Charles Louis Napoleon—Monsieur de Talleyrand Comes to Call—Caroline's Confession—Josephine's Debts—The Emperor of Russia—Hortense and Her Talismans—Her Intervention on Behalf of Talleyrand—Madame de Metternich—General Durosnel.

SOON after my return to Saint Cloud I realized I was about to have another child. I resolutely cast aside all the gloomy thoughts which I had cherished so long, considering that my life no longer belonged to me alone and that it was my sacred duty to preserve it. Another duty served to stimulate my energy. I had again undertaken the task of leaving no stone unturned in my efforts to assure the happiness of my husband, that being who seemed to shun deliberately everything that might restore his peace of mind.

I shared my mother's apartment; the King's rooms were on the lower floor. He seemed annoyed about this and I decided to move down beside him. Louis was bored at Saint Cloud and wished us to stay in Paris. In order to follow him there I was forced to leave my mother and my son. Furthermore I was obliged to conquer my grief at being surrounded by objects which recalled the loss I had sustained. Unappreciative of what I was doing for him, my husband remained cold and self-centered, rewarding my efforts to please him neither by word nor glance. While we had been on our journey our physician had urged him either to advance or postpone the date of our return to Paris for fear that the mo-

ment of our arrival there might not be favorable to my health. Nothing could change Louis' plans. The carriage in which we drove daily from Paris to Saint Cloud where we dined came from the imperial stables and was very uncomfortable, so much so indeed that I was one day so badly jolted as to become ill and be in danger of a miscarriage. I spoke to the King about it, asking him to allow me to stay that night at Saint Cloud as I felt really unwell.

"You know that this would inconvenience me," he replied shortly. This reply crushed me. It was so cruel that I felt it gave me the right to consider myself freed from one set of duties and in a position to give myself wholly to other obligations.

As a crowning piece of misery the King wished to return to Holland and take me with him. In vain my medical adviser declared that the injuries my long and frequent journeys [1] had inflicted on me made such a trip entirely impossible for at least another four and a half months. My husband pretended not to understand these reasons, told me that I was a better judge of what was good for me than my physician and that I should be all right in two weeks. He repeated this statement until the moment of his departure, saying, "I shall expect you in two weeks."

How could he be so inhuman toward his wife when he was kind enough to other people? During our last trip I had seen him sympathize with the illness of the son of a poor peasant, have the sick boy cared for by his own doctor, and delay our departure in order to look after this utter stranger. Before we were married he frequently went without his private carriage in order to lend it to a young boy who was in poor health. It seemed as though I were the only being for whom he reserved all his harshness. And yet that was what he called *love*. Is it surprising that this word has always filled me with terror?

Madame de Broc left me in order to rejoin her husband

who wished her company. All her personal feelings made her desire my return to Holland; yet, eager as she had been for a reconciliation to take place between me and my husband, she was equally convinced now that all hope for our future happiness together must be given up. As she loved me she could not see why, after I had attempted to achieve the impossible, I should submit to this new sacrifice. Consequently she entreated me to remain in Paris for my confinement.

"I will conceal nothing from you," she said; "I promise to tell you the truth about the King. If I again discover any traces of that suspiciousness, that malevolence toward you, which you are unable to stand any longer, if I hear him make any more of those statements which sully your reputation, I will not hesitate to advise you not to return to him. Your life is necessary to your children and to your friends, and those with whom you come in contact will know how to judge your conduct."

"My dear Adèle," I replied, "my life in Holland was such that if I return there it will be only as a means of putting an end to my existence. I feel that at the present time my life belongs to someone else, and I must care for my health in order that he may live. If I survive my confinement—and I do not believe I shall do so—you will see me again in Holland. I care too little about what becomes of me to have the will to resist the forces that urge me thither. My fate lies there. I will return, come what may."

Adèle's departure saddened me. I had nevertheless consented to her going away. She would be happy in the company of her worthy husband. It had been agreed we should write one another when the opportunity occurred and place the letters in hat-boxes or other packages, as we were convinced that otherwise our correspondence would be opened and read.

After my husband had left for Holland I remained at Saint Cloud. One day after dinner the Emperor said to

me: "Go and put on your simplest gown and hat. Take your lady in waiting with you, and we shall pay a visit to the Saint Cloud fair." The Empress had a headache and did not care to accompany us. I hastened back quickly to the drawing-room, but my Dutch lady in waiting took so long to change her dress that the Emperor grew tired of waiting for her, and we set out alone on foot. The Emperor gave me his arm. The aide-de-camp General Bertrand, who happened to be on duty, walked beside us. We soon reached the main alley of the park which formed the center of the fair. We kept some distance from the different booths in order not to be recognized, for whenever a crowd caught sight of the Emperor he would be surrounded amid cheers. This obliged him to hurry back to the palace. Often we saw him returning from a little walk almost carried shoulder-high by a mob and swearing that he would never be caught again. On this particular occasion as he had a lady with him no one paid any attention to him. Moreover night was coming on. The throng pushed its way toward the gates. We meanwhile continued to look at the sights of the fair. The *voiture nomade* caught our eye, and being out to see the sights we took the opportunity to investigate it. While General Bertrand was paying for our admission the Emperor began talking to the showman regarding the usefulness of his machine and embarrassed him greatly by the directness of some of his questions.

When we came out the crowd jostled us so violently that the Emperor was worried about me. He hastened to drag me into the first show-booth we came across. It happened to be a tent containing an exhibition of wax figures representing the signing of the Peace-Treaty at Tilsit. Around a large table were seated figures representing the Emperor of Russia and Emperor Napoleon. In addition to these, and for what reason I cannot tell, there had been added figures of the entire imperial family, which had probably been used on other occasions, while

the Sleeping Beauty reclined in one corner. There was hardly anyone present to admire all these masterpieces; nevertheless the showman delivered his usual lecture, and we heard ourselves described one after the other. We were about to leave when we noticed that General Bertrand had not come into the tent with us. The crowd had separated us from him, and as neither the Emperor nor I ever had any money with us we both were much embarrassed. The situation struck me as so odd and amusing that I could not restrain my mirth, and my amusement increased the Emperor's embarrassed manner. The more uncomfortable he looked the more I wanted to laugh. There was nothing to be done but wait patiently for General Bertrand to find us.

In order to pass the time we examined rather more closely the waxworks. I questioned the man in charge about each of the different portraits. He assured us they were all excellent resemblances and particularly praised that of the Queen of Holland, which seemed to have a particular attraction for me. It was true the complexion was delicately colored and the face quite charming. Indeed I must confess that he had given my name to the most attractive of his wax figures. Nevertheless, the way her hair was done showed such a lack of taste that I felt rather ashamed. I ventured to advise the showman to change the position of a string of pearls that fell over one eye and gave her a far from refined expression. As a result of my comments he set about adjusting her coiffure according to my indications, and did so with such gravity that the Emperor was not able to keep serious over what he called a piece of feminine vanity on my part. Even the showman himself began to laugh. But it was time for our fun to cease as the Emperor began to be rather impatient. If General Bertrand did not put in an appearance it was evident that we should be obliged to reveal our identity in order to escape from our predicament. Before doing so, however, I had the idea of stand-

ing by the door where the General could see me from a distance. I was less likely to be recognized than the Emperor. The General finally did catch sight of me. He had been looking for us anxiously everywhere. He hurried up, all out of breath, and allowed us to make our escape. We hastened to return home and amused the Empress greatly by our account of our adventures. Such moments of merriment, however, were rare indeed, and I had still difficulty in escaping my worries and fortifying my health, which continued to decline.

The court moved to Fontainebleau. I was obliged to make the trip by water because of my extreme weakness. This had been increased by the fact that at a ball, given by the Grand Duchess of Berg [2] in honor of the marriage of Prince Jerome, the Emperor in spite of my protests, which he blamed on my state of depression, had forced me to dance. The court's stay at Fontainebleau was enlivened by all sorts of amusements. In the morning there would be elaborate hunting expeditions in the forest or lectures on physics by the famous Professor Charles. In the evening there would be either a play, concert or dance in the apartment of the Empress or in those of the princesses. I was excused from taking part in the hunting parties and occasionally would go and paint in the forest near the palace. In the evening I held a reception or I went to my mother's apartment. Many foreign princes visited the imperial court. Those I saw the most frequently were the Prince of Baden, the Prince of Coburg [3] and the Princes of Mecklenburg. One of the last-named interested me particularly because he had just lost his wife, sister of the Emperor of Russia, and was overcome with grief. As I rarely went out and was obliged to remain more and more on my chaise longue everyone was kind enough to come and take tea with me and bring me the latest news of what was going on.

My husband wrote rarely. He accused me of not hav-

ing kept my word because two weeks after his departure from Paris I had not appeared in Holland. Consequently he no longer spoke of my return but demanded that his son be sent to him. The child was extremely delicate, and the doctors declared that the Dutch climate would not agree with him. This was a cause of new worries and anxieties for me. To send him to a place where his health would be in danger was a terrible idea. I explained all my reasons to my husband; I forwarded all the reports of the physicians; but he had made up his mind to have what he wanted and I felt that in the end I should be obliged to give in.

The kingdom of Westphalia had just been created, and Jerome with his wife went to Cassel, the new capital. The Princess of Baden returned to her husband at Mannheim, and the Grand Duchess of Berg and I were left alone in the midst of a still brilliant court. The petty annoyances and vexations of every-day life exist at court as they do elsewhere, and are still more disagreeable there on account of the stately and solemn setting.

The glorious Peace of Tilsit had restored order and general happiness. All hopes seemed to have been realized, all wishes fulfilled. Nevertheless those on whom the Emperor had conferred power and wealth were uneasy. They scrutinized the future and were alarmed at the apparent lack of stability of the régime. For the first time the topic of a divorce between the Emperor and his wife was openly discussed. The Emperor, it is true, had not said a single word in regard to it as yet, a fact which caused the friends of the Empress to consider such remarks as were made to be due merely to the hostility of certain individuals.

Having been asked by my husband to present some special petition to his brother I requested and was granted an audience. It was at a time when the King was sending back from Holland many Frenchmen belonging to his body-guard. The Emperor was annoyed and displeased

with him. He showed this plainly by the way in which he received me. I attempted to soothe him as I usually succeeded in doing. I begged him to allow Frenchmen to wear the Order of Holland (which Louis had recently created) and thus recognize the existence of this order. The Emperor declared that as far as he was concerned he would never wear it, for the King had instituted it at a time when he had asked him not to do so. A few days later he granted one of the ministers, Mollien, permission to wear this decoration. I also spoke about my husband's wish to have his son with him in Holland and the doctors' fears as to the effects of the climate on the child's health, owing to his frail constitution. This was the Emperor's answer:

"A father asks that his son join him. The child is not yet seven years old and I cannot prevent his departure. He is the only boy in the family. If he returns to Holland he will die as his older brother did, and the entire French nation will oblige me to obtain a divorce. People have no confidence in my brothers, who, moreover, are all self-seeking and ambitious. Eugène does not bear my name, and in spite of my efforts to restore peace my reign will be followed by complete anarchy. Only by having a son to succeed me can matters be arranged. If I have not yet secured a divorce the only thing that has restrained me has been my affection for your mother, for all France is anxious to have me do so. This was obvious at the moment of your son's death. Everyone believed that I was his father. You know how absurd such an idea is. Yet it was impossible to prevent all of Europe thinking the child was my son." He stopped a moment, noticing my surprise, and then went on: "The public did not think the worse of you on that account; you are generally considered to be moral in your conduct, yet everyone thought this was true." After a pause he continued: "It was perhaps just as well to have people think so. I considered his death to have been a great misfortune."

I was so overcome that, as I stood beside the fireplace, I was not able to utter a word. The remark, "It was perhaps just as well that people should think so," seemed to tear a veil from my eyes. It caused a turmoil in my brain and struck deep into my heart, wounding me more than all the rest of the Emperor's words. Was it possible that while he had been treating me as his daughter, while I had been glad and grateful to look upon him as a father who took the place of the one I had lost, all these attentions, this solicitude was the result of deliberate planning and not of spontaneous affection? The thing that is dearest to a woman, her reputation, had in this instance been sacrificed for reasons of State, instead of being protected by the man who should have been the first to do so. Those marks of affection which the Emperor had bestowed on me, and which I considered both precious and gratifying, furnished additional proof of my shame in the eyes of the world. The Emperor had been able to conceive the idea that I might be guilty. His compliments, instead of being, as I had considered them, sincere tokens of his esteem, had doubtless been empty phrases prompted by political motives. Instead of being my friends the people about me were perhaps merely courtiers seeking the favor of the mother of the Emperor's heir. I had perhaps been simply an instrument by which ambitious persons had hoped to gain their ends. Ah, how dreadful it is to have one's illusions shattered so rudely! Yet I admit this first movement of indignation passed off quickly. Evil that comes from without, and of which we do not cherish the secret sting within our own bosoms, strikes us but is powerless to inflict deep wounds. My heart was pure, and I knew that truth is not to be found at the courts of monarchs, that where ambition holds the center of the stage one cannot expect to find either sincerity or rectitude. Only I could not help feeling sorry for my lot.

Since then I have thought over this conversation with the Emperor and, having grown more familiar with his

character, I have come to believe that the words I treated so seriously were uttered merely as a passing phrase. I am convinced that he never could have credited a gossip which cast an unpleasant light on my character. He had enough enemies who sought to slander him in every way without himself offering them additional material. The verses printed in reply to an English newspaper attack which I had asked Bourrienne to explain to me shortly after my marriage were proof enough that he did not wish any discreditable reports about my conduct to be put in circulation. At the moment, however, I did not reason so clearly, and for a long time I felt a repulsion toward the Emperor on account of what he had said.

His mention of a divorce had also struck me, and I was therefore less astonished than I should otherwise have been when later my mother told me of an interview she had had with the Chief of Police, Fouché. Fouché had come to her and said that all France wished the Emperor to obtain a divorce, that so far he had not considered it, but that in the end he would be obliged to yield to public opinion. Fouché even went so far as to show my mother the rough draft of a letter he advised her to write the Senate, and suggested it would be best if she were to be the one to take the first steps in the matter of securing this separation. Previously a divorce had seemed to me to be entirely out of the question, but my conversation with the Emperor caused me to fear that he was already acquainted with Fouché's proposals. The Empress could not make up her mind what to do, and I did not dare advise her in regard to so delicate a matter. Yet when she obliged me to express an opinion all I told her was that if I were in her place I should go to the Emperor, reproach him for treating me in this underhanded manner, and ask him to formulate his wishes clearly. If he showed that he wished a divorce, I would not stay with him another instant.

At the same time I took care to advise my mother to act

as she thought best, for her affection for the Emperor might cause her to differ from my point of view. As a matter of fact, having discussed the matter at length with her various ladies in waiting and especially with Madame de Rémusat, the friend of Monsieur de Talleyrand, in whose judgment she had special confidence, the Empress decided to reply to Fouché that she would not take any action to defend herself. She did not speak to the Emperor either, but he shortly afterwards was informed of the advice Fouché had given the Empress.

He reproached my mother for having kept silent and assured her that Fouché had acted on his own initiative and not on the Emperor's behalf. Nevertheless he questioned the Empress as to what she thought about the matter. She replied that she would never take the first steps to bring about a change which would separate her from him. She said she considered their destiny had been so extraordinary that it had certainly been directed by Providence, and she believed she would bring misfortune on both of them if, of her own accord, she sought to separate their two lives. The Emperor showed that he was touched, adopted the same affectionate attitude toward her as in the past, and the project seemed to have been entirely put aside. Yet the incident had aroused apprehension in my mother's heart. The talk going about Paris in regard to a possible divorce was being repeated to her all the time, and it so greatly disturbed her peace of mind that I frequently wondered whether in the end it would not be better for her if the divorce became an accomplished fact.

The Emperor left for Italy. While there he conferred the title of Prince of Venice on the Viceroy. This title was also that of the heir to the Italian throne, and Eugène's new honor aroused much comment. I did not know what to think and began to believe that the question of a separation had never been considered seriously by the Emperor.

During the Emperor's trip to Italy my mother frequently came to see me, for having returned to Paris I was obliged to remain constantly on my chaise longue. The princes whom I had received informally at Fontainebleau continued to attend my evening receptions regularly. They all had some request to make. The unfortunate position they were in made me sympathize with them, and I took the greatest pains to make them forget that they were doubly in a position of inferiority, being vanquished enemies living as strangers in the land of those who had conquered them. Consequently they seemed to enjoy coming to my home more than going elsewhere, and, in spite of all the amusements, balls and other entertainments the capital offered, they never missed dropping in to see me at least for a few moments. They often told me that they felt at my house as if they were in the midst of their own family circle and that a sister could not have given them better advice than they received from me. "If I ever find myself in an embarrassing position," the Grand Duke of Würzburg,[4] brother of the Emperor of Austria, one day said to me, "I shall ask you what I should do." I can readily imagine that my advice was useful, for it sprang from a sincere sympathy for their misfortunes. On New Year's Day I gave little gifts to all my household and my intimate friends. I suggested to the princes that they consider themselves included among the latter, and attend the festivities. It was a real family party. Among other presents, I gave a portrait by Isabey of the young Russian Princess whom her husband the Prince of Mecklenburg mourned so bitterly. The portrait formed the cover of a box.

The Emperor's return [5] put an end to these visits. He was very severe regarding the manner in which foreigners were to be received and declared they should be admitted only to the fashionable clubs and not to our homes. Prince William of Prussia had just arrived, and as Prussia was protesting against a number of things people

thought it was his presence that caused this rule to be made. On the other hand the princes, vexed at being forbidden to call on us, sought refuge in the drawing-rooms of the royalist Faubourg Saint-Germain where they heard the Emperor spoken of in a manner which doubtless was more in accordance with their personal feelings. One day the Emperor was blaming me for having received them and said: "Are there not enough Frenchmen in the world that you have to invite foreigners who can never care for us whatever happens? But of course they have such nice manners, and ladies always seek to make themselves agreeable to everyone."

"Ah, Sire," I interrupted, shocked by his last remark, "I am too anxious that they have a good opinion of my conduct to seek to make myself too agreeable to them." The Emperor smiled and said nothing more about the matter.

At that time he had made up his mind to marry my mother's cousin Stéphanie Tascher to the Duc d'Arenberg. He was a nice clever boy but not attractive. His family, which was most respectable, was very anxious for the match. The wedding was performed at my house. All the young man's relatives from Bruxelles and Germany were present. The Emperor and Empress also attended the ceremony. Princess Stéphanie did not appear extremely enthusiastic about her husband, although her caprice for General Rapp was entirely a thing of the past. For the last two years she had remained constantly at Saint-Germain. I heard later that the Prince of the Asturias had wished to marry her and had made a formal request for her hand. The Ambassador from Würtemberg had presented a similar request on behalf of the Crown Prince of Würtemberg, but the Emperor declined to consider either of these. The new couple were not at all happy. I was never able to persuade Stéphanie to go to Brussels to see her husband's family, who were very anxious to have her do so. She was kind and gentle, even

easy-going as regarded the details of her daily life, but obstinate in her opinions and overromantic in her emotions. She had the melancholy courage seven years later to have her marriage annulled on the ground of constraint, and later she married the Comte de Quitry, my mother's equerry.

At the same time another marriage took place at the house of the Princess Caroline, that of Murat's niece with the heir of the Hohenzollern family. The Prince's mother was present. It was the second time she had come to Paris since so many changes had taken place in our private fortunes. She had done much to keep her husband on his throne, and we were pleased to think that our long friendship had proved useful to his dynasty. I recalled how kind she had been to us during the Revolution, and I always received her at my house as though she were my mother. She often repeated that she should have wished to confer a title on me. As of all human weaknesses the one most common in Germany is a desire to be related to royalty, the Princess would have preferred to have her son marry some young member of our family rather than a relative of the Murats, whose rise in station she considered rather too recent. Nevertheless the marriage was a success and the couple are still happy.

Nothing more was said about the divorce, but everything indicated to me that the Emperor was torn between a desire to have a son and heir and a reluctance to separate from the woman whom he loved and who had always been so devoted to him.

A few days before he left for Bayonne, I entered his drawing-room to say good-by. My mother was just leaving the room. The Emperor was sitting down and seemed thoughtful and preoccupied. As he saw me enter he did not stir but looked at me closely without saying a word. The time for my confinement was very near. Suddenly he exclaimed: "It hurts me to see you like that. How I would love your mother if she were in that condition!"

Then he again lost himself in thought until the Empress returned. This preoccupation, the sudden exclamation that had escaped him, all seemed to me to prove that he was obsessed and tortured by the idea of a divorce. Nevertheless he left [6] with my mother for the south of France, and she was not worried as long as he was at Bayonne where his attention was wholly absorbed by negotiations with Spain.

Thus I found myself alone in Paris, a prey to all my mental anguish, without any consolation other than that which I could find in the company of my ladies in waiting and the officers of my household. I was convinced myself that the end of my confinement was also to be the end of my earthly life and I did not dread to see this end approaching.

I had become more and more attached to my surviving son. His delicate health required my constant care, but his father's wish that the boy should join him in Holland frightened me and made me foresee further misfortunes. The child fell dangerously ill of a tertian fever. In spite of my own ill health I did not leave his bedside and I felt that other sufferings still were in store for me.

As had been agreed Adèle wrote me when occasion offered an exact account of whatever went on in Holland that concerned me. My husband had not been able to prevent public prayers being offered for my recovery, but when surrounded by his courtiers he made biting remarks about me, which wounded Adèle to the heart. He talked about me often with her at this period, telling of the violent love with which I had inspired him, and of the way in which I had ruined his life. He wished always to put all the blame on me but could find only imaginary wrongs of which to accuse me. His unfortunate character caused him constantly to think up new grounds for suspicion, which embittered his feelings still more.

One day the King sent for his surgeon, a man skilled in his art, but rough and uneducated. "I am counting on

you," the King said, "to do me a great service. People are anxious I should go to Paris and be present at the Queen's confinement. Perhaps this is a plan to deceive me. Perhaps the child has already been born. I think in fact this is what has happened. You should certainly be able to tell if her pregnancy is a simulated one. The excuse for your trip will be to take my son back with you."

On leaving the King the surgeon told Monsieur de Broc of the errand he was being sent on and Madame de Broc hastened to communicate with me. At the same time she advised me to receive the surgeon and take every precaution to convince him of the actual state of my health in order that he might reassure my husband and calm his constantly increasing uneasiness. Her letter was sent me in a shoe which the surgeon brought with him, little guessing what the package contained. Imagine my state of mind on learning what low means of espionage my husband employed. He dared put my reputation at the mercy of an utter stranger. The passion which blinded my husband's reason caused him to forget all the prayers he had uttered, the efforts he had made and the resistance he had been forced to overcome in order to secure our reconciliation. Was he not teaching me that there is a point beyond which the most obstinate desire to insure another person's happiness cannot go? Was it not *he* who was breaking the mournful chain of duty which I had once more consented to assume? From that day on my mind was made up; I would never again return to him.

I was at my son's bedside, suffering from the most intense mental anguish, the result of all the foregoing thoughts, when the surgeon was announced. "Enter, monsieur," I said. "Look at me closely and you can report to the King the exact condition in which you found me."

The man stammered, attributed the idea of sending him on such a mission to my husband's ill health and to his

natural cast of mind. When he returned to Holland and told the King what had taken place, Louis, unable to believe that anyone could have betrayed him, sent for Monsieur de Broc and declared I must be mad to have spoken in such a manner.

Who is the person whose health and strength could resist such constantly repeated insults and misfortunes? My health had received a fatal blow; it would doubtless have given way completely if the presence of my unborn child had not once more animated my courage. But nothing could dispel a dark and gloomy tinge that colored all my thoughts. Following the surgeon's depressing visit I daily felt violent pains that seemed to indicate the approach of my confinement. A month went by and I became accustomed to them. I counted that there was still another week to wait. Caroline came and invited me to take my son to a party she was giving that evening for her children. I accepted and drove there, lying in my carriage, and taking all the precautions my condition rendered necessary. But even this simple outing brought on more severe pains.

Tight-rope dancers, executing their performances near the children, and who I constantly feared would fall on my son, increased my nervousness. High Chancellor Cambacérès, who according to the law was obliged to be present at my confinement, was constantly expecting a summons on account of my increasing weakness. That evening, as he was not at all well himself, he came up to me and said: "As I see your Majesty at a reception I need not expect to be called tonight and with your permission I shall return home and have leeches applied."

"You may leave," I replied. "I hope you will not be disturbed."

A few moments after his departure my pains became so violent that I had no further doubt that I was about to give birth to my child. I quickly climbed back into my carriage and scarcely had time to reach home. My

accoucheur was sent for, and the authorities who were obliged to attend me on that occasion were notified. My equerry Monsieur de la Ville, who was sent to summon the High Chancellor, found him still suffering from the effect of being leeched. Nevertheless, since he was a punctilious observer of etiquette, he obeyed the summons although in a condition which aroused the mirth of all Paris.

In the night of the 20th and 21st of April, 1808, I gave birth to a son.[7] I should have preferred a daughter, but the announcement that the baby was a boy caused my mother great joy, and the Emperor ordered a salute to be fired all along the Spanish border where he then was. The birth of a second possible heir to the throne fitted in admirably with his political plans. In order to convey the news to him officially I dispatched my French chamberlain as messenger, at the same time sending my Dutch chamberlain Count Bylandt to take the news to my husband. The King had the event announced to his subjects from the palace balcony and received the customary congratulations. I learned later that the surgeon had declared in the drawing room: "Queens have the right to be pregnant a shorter time than other women; they do not count as ordinary people do."

My son was so delicate that I feared from his birth I should lose him. It was necessary to bathe him in wine and wrap him up in cotton in order to keep him alive. I did not care whether I lived or not myself; my gloomy forebodings concerning the future made the idea of death quite bearable. In fact I was so convinced that my last day had come that I asked my physician[8] whether I could survive another twenty-four hours. My condition seemed to him quite inexplicable. As a matter of fact it grew worse steadily.

A visit from Monsieur de Talleyrand added to my sense of discomfort and affected my nerves in a disagreeable manner. He was one of the officials who were sup-

posed to be in attendance when my son was born. He always wore his hair powdered. The smell of the powder was so strong that when he came close to me to express his good wishes I thought I should suffocate. I did not dare say anything as long as he remained, but I felt that his presence was bad for me. My mental anguish still further increased the seriousness of my physical condition. Utter discouragement came over me and I thought I was about to die. It was then that my pulse ceased to beat regularly and that my consumption began to develop. No longer was I insensible to pain. On the contrary everything affected me and alarmed me. If my son happened to be ill I thought he was dying. If I left the house for a moment my imagination would conjure up pictures of the terrible things that might happen during my absence. I stared anxiously at the first person I met and was not reassured until I was back again with my children. If a man rode along beside my carriage I fancied he had been thrown off and I felt the wheels go over his body. If people picked up my son I sprang forward, for he seemed to be slipping from their grasp. Yet since I continued to live on in spite of all the sufferings provoked by my nervous condition it must have been because my destiny willed it. It was necessary that I should continue to live and suffer. Queen of Holland, Princess of France, mother of two princes sole heirs to the most glorious throne of Europe, I spent my days in sorrow and wretchedness of spirit. How often did I envy the lot of those whose lives are spent in the midst of their family and friends, who can be cared for and comforted without attracting the curiosity of strangers! But royalty has no family. Mine was scattered: my brother lived far away; my mother was not with me. My husband's jealous nature had estranged all my old friends. No one was left who could console me and sympathize with my troubles. Condemned to lie day after day on a chaise longue my only amusement was to sing old ballads to the accompaniment

MADAME MERE
Portrait of Napoleon's Mother
from the Collection of Prince Napoleon

of my guitar and I was too worn out for even that mild recreation. My lungs had become so delicate that singing was forbidden me. I resigned myself to the spectacle of watching what natural talents I possessed disappear, and my gloomy fancy intensified my physical ailments since it conjured up imaginary ills in addition to my real ones.

The continued weakness of my new-born child, which made me very uneasy, remedied for a while my general prostration. The baby nearly died. It became necessary to change his nurse, and I went myself to a village to secure a new one. But this brief revival of energy due to my maternal anxiety cost me dearly. I took cold while caring for my son and was afflicted with terrific headaches. Will my readers believe me? I enjoyed this physical pain. It banished for a short time that moral depression which is so bitter, so exhausting to a heart overflowing with grief. As a climax to all my troubles the Emperor's family took exception to the fact that I was staying on in France. My husband's mother declared openly that I had abandoned her son when he was ill, unhappy, and wretched because I was not with him. At a time when I wasting away before their very eyes, when the doctors had given up all hope of my recovery and when I did not dare speak of the grief that gnawed at my bosom, it was still *I* who was considered in the wrong. The thought of my returning to Holland made me tremble. Yet if I did not do so the public, not understanding the reasons which prompted my actions, would severely condemn me. On the other hand, if I did go, would not my reputation suffer at least as much from the remarks and attitude of a husband such as mine? What a piteous dilemma I was in!

One day Madame Campan came to see me. She understood my character and guessed how miserable I was. "Do not let yourself pine away," she said to me with tears in her eyes. "I know how discouraged you are, but it is necessary to face life as it is. Live on, and in the end your

conduct will be appreciated and more fairly judged." What good could such advice do to a broken spirit?

Affairs in Spain were becoming serious. The Prince of the Asturias had seized the throne from his father. The Emperor summoned them both to Bayonne. My mother often told me how, on this occasion, the anger and hatred of the parents toward their son expressed itself with a directness and vivacity such as our Northern and more controlled natures find difficult to understand. The father seemed to find a sort of joy in surrendering his crown as long as it should not be given to his son. The throne was bestowed on Joseph, at that time King of Naples.

Consequently the throne of Naples became vacant. Caroline at once left for Bayonne and returned shortly afterwards proud and triumphant at having been made Queen of Naples. I could not understand her satisfaction. She had been happy where she was with her husband, free from the cares of state and the obligations of authority. Rich, surrounded by everything that can insure comfort and confer happiness on others, yet she was willing, even anxious, to set aside all this in order to obtain a crown. Indeed, the thought delighted her. Happiness consists in a harmony between our tastes and our position in society.

Why was it that I could not appreciate the brilliant, distinguished life Fate offered me as highly as I would have done the calm tranquillity of some more modest lot? Probably because my affection for certain people meant more to me than anything else in the world, and in my position there was no way in which I could express that affection. To be sure I had abandoned all my youthful dreams of domestic bliss and for years had not dared even to think of them again. Sorrow was all that life held for me. How could it be otherwise since the bond of matrimony which I believed should be the fairest portion of my existence was its most galling burden?

My children's life, their mother's reputation were at

stake in this question of my leaving or remaining in France. It was absolutely necessary that I look after my sons in that country and there too I felt that I must gain the appreciation of the persons whose opinion mattered.

That other affection for Monsieur de Flahaut, whose appeal I had so long resisted, appeared to have been transformed into a tender friendship, a friendship such as my heart desired and which could console me for the unjust opinion people were beginning to have of my conduct. Who knew me better than the man I had loved so dearly in the past? Who could better appreciate my force of character than he whom I had so long avoided in spite of the strength of my inclination for him? Since the last campaign he had remained in Germany. The war was over. I no longer worried over the question of his safety. He sympathized with the misfortunes which had befallen me and had written me several times. On his way to take the waters in the Pyrenees he passed through Paris. I discovered that his sentiments toward me, his respectful admiration had not changed, and I felt that at least this friendship might prove a source of support for me in my affliction. It was in such feelings as these that I sought consolation for all the affection that I failed to find elsewhere. Consequently I did not seek to hide [9] from the man who seemed worthy of my confidence either my sorrows, or the extent of my discouragement, or the hopes which I placed in him.

"Friendship," I told him, "is the noblest sentiment the human heart can conceive. But at the same time it is also the most difficult to achieve since it constantly demands perfection. Love demands only a tender reciprocity of feeling. Friendship requires also nobility of ideals. Anyone can be a lover, but how many people know how to remain friends? In other words, how many people can treat another human being with that frankness which admits one's own mistakes combined with that tolerance which accepts the weaknesses of others? Hence do not

fear to confide in me your affection for another woman. I insist that you do so. I am sure of myself; I can bear both my grief and yours too. I want only to be the consoler of misfortune, which is so frequent that to seek its remedy it is to assume a duty both arduous and sweet." Monsieur de Flahaut remained only a few hours in Paris.

My complete yielding to all those emotions which I considered quite innocent had perhaps a tendency to fill my mind with new hopes as vain as the old ones had been. I was preparing more disappointments for myself, which I should become aware of as by degrees I discovered the truth. But as yet I did not surmise what lay before me. The mutual confidence we had promised one another was enough for me. My resolve to forgive whatever there might be to forgive removed all fears of ever being deceived by my friend.

One day I went to see Caroline whom I found in the midst of preparations for her departure for her new kingdom. She hurried about, now inspecting her traveling carriages, now coming back to speak to me, then dashing off to give an order with a smile, returning the next instant to shed a tear.

"Hortense," she finally said to me, "I must confess to you my grief at leaving France in spite of the crown which Fate has placed on the head of my children. You have never guessed the depth of my affection for Monsieur de Flahaut. How often have I feared that his feeling for you was equally intense! You are the only woman in the world I should have feared as a rival. He seemed to care for you, but this affection was only a fictitious one. Although he was young and frivolous it is impossible he could love anyone as he did me. It is impossible twice to experience the feelings I aroused, and had it not been for my duties and my love for Murat I do not know whether I should have been able to resist his advances. I dread the despair the news of my departure will cause him. He will perhaps try to console himself in your

company, but promise me not to take him seriously. He must remain faithful to me. He has cared for me too dearly to do otherwise. The idea that another woman might attract him would be torture for me."

I had let her finish her sentences without interrupting her. My breath failed me. Part of what she was telling me I already knew, but it seemed as though I was hearing it for the first time, so intense was my pain. I collected all my courage and replied: "Why should you fear me? You know nobody is interested in me."

"You are the only woman I am afraid of," she replied emphatically. "I cannot tell how you do it, but you have a secret for attracting men and making them admire and sympathize with you. There are women more beautiful than you are. For instance I know I am the better-looking of us two, but you must have some special charm of your own because everyone is drawn to you. A thousand times I have tried to make Monsieur de Flahaut say he disliked you. He never would do so. It seemed when I spoke of you as though I were referring to some sacred being; but I know you and trust you. I saw him a few days ago when he came through Paris. The glimpse of a bracelet I was wearing upset him, for his love for me is as jealous as it is intense. Your name came into my mind and I told him the bracelet was a present from you. Promise me when you see him again not to betray me."

I promised and returned home in a state of mind which is difficult to describe. Had the man who had sworn he was sincere been deceiving me? I had just learned that another woman had been the object of his attentions at the very time he had declared I, and I alone, occupied his thoughts. True I had asked only for his friendship; but did that not include complete frankness? Made more wretched than I can describe by this cruel uncertainty, I did not know which way to turn. The consolation I had counted on was once again failing me.

More alone than ever, indifferent to everything that

went on about me, obliged to keep all my troubles to myself, I grew more ill, and my illness threatened to prove serious.

Frequently I felt my interest in Monsieur de Flahaut revive. I said to myself: "It is true that he deceived me, but perhaps he is bitterly unhappy at the loss of the woman he loves; and if he really is fond of her how could he have spoken about the matter to me? The one thing he did which was wrong was to make me believe that I was the only woman he cared about. But he is sad and in pain. I must forgive him. We must again be friends."

He returned to Paris before Caroline's departure but left at once for the Spanish front. I was at Saint Cloud at the time with my mother, who had come back from Bayonne. As soon as Queen Caroline had informed him of our conversation Monsieur de Flahaut wrote me and explained everything. He declared Caroline had told him that she had spoken as she did in order to separate us and added: "I am sure that after our conversation Hortense will not care for you any more. She is too romantic to do so under such conditions, and that was what I wanted, as the idea that you cared for her was very disagreeable to me."

Monsieur de Flahaut wrote me these details and I believed him. They seemed [10] probable enough. Perhaps too I wished to deceive myself. Nevertheless there remained in my mind a feeling of suspicion, which prevented me from being entirely at ease. Henceforward no man's affection seemed to me stable enough to be depended upon; yet how can one live without some such support?

My mother had come back from Bayonne. The visible change in my health frightened her, and she wished me to come and live with her at Saint Cloud. Life as it was there, although it had charmed me before my marriage because I had found much with which to occupy my time, now wearied me on account of its futility and the need

I felt of having occupations which would take my mind off my own worries, and give me something to do that was not directly connected with myself. Instead of that I was not left alone an instant. I spent the mornings in my mother's drawing-room where she worked on her embroidery, surrounded by her ladies in waiting. For hours on end I would sit beside one of these ladies, watching her thread go in and out, without being able to say a word or follow a line of thought. Every few minutes my mother would leave the room in order to receive some visitor or hear some petition. She did not dare leave the palace for fear the Emperor might wish to see her and might come along the balcony looking for her as he did frequently. Between the completion of some special task and a meeting of his ministers he often took a little stroll with her. It was he who fixed the hour at which we were to go driving with him. We always had to be exactly on time and almost always were obliged to wait an hour or two for the council meeting to be over. Finally the Emperor appeared, and through wind, rain or snow he would drive for several miles in the country, returning finally to the palace. Often the Emperor, his mind still full of the problems that had been discussed at the meeting or busy with some other weighty question, would hardly say a word. After the drive we dressed for dinner, which we took alone, the Emperor, the Empress and I. Sometimes the conversation was not more lively than it had been during the drive. After dinner the Emperor returned to his work. The Empress played a game of whist in her drawing-room. I did not care for cards but nevertheless played also until ten or eleven o'clock when we all went to bed.

The emptiness and dreariness of such a monotonous life were more than I could bear, and the weakness of my lungs increased. Madame de Broc heard what an alarming condition I was in. For a long time I had been longing to have her with me, but did not wish to disturb her

happiness, or make any effort to bring her to me. As soon as she heard how ill I was she hastened to my side. Her excellent husband willingly consented to this sacrifice. No sooner had she arrived than I poured out to her sympathetic ear all my troubles. Her presence was a relief to me.

My husband had given up writing to me. He several times even returned my letters without having broken the seal, after having pointedly pushed them aside in the presence of his courtiers. I felt that I had done wrong in not acceding to his request that I should travel to Holland for my confinement. Since I was no longer present his suspicious nature, having no direct object, busied itself with the affairs of all those about him. If a French courtier who was familiar with our married life tried to defend me when my reputation was attacked he would at once be dismissed from court. He considered they must be spies, either of mine or of the Emperor.

Already the King had received several reprimands from his brother about the smuggling that went on between Holland and England.[11] The Emperor always considered subjects in their broad lines. The King on the contrary was only interested in minute details. A single idle phrase was enough to arouse his suspicion. He reflected as to what reasons might have prompted it, drew all sorts of conclusions from it and finally discovered a treasonable significance that had no basis other than the activity of his own imagination. The result was that the majority of the Frenchmen whom he had taken to Holland with him were dismissed on account of something they had said, some doubt he had conceived in regard to their conduct. Instead of being definitely dismissed, however, they were sent on special missions or received other posts, as for instance Monsieur de Caulaincourt, whom he appointed Ambassador to Naples. The others were shifted about: Monsieur d'Arjuzon, who had been the King's high chamberlain, became my first gentleman

in waiting. Messieurs Devaux and de La Ville were appointed my equerries. Consequently in a short time I had so numerous a household that I did not know how to pay them all, especially as my income [12] which I received from France was only that of a French princess.

Monsieur Decazes also arrived with a letter from my husband appointing him my private secretary. I had already Monsieur Després, an elderly man who had been with me for a long time and with whom I was thoroughly satisfied. This was the only occasion on which I refused to carry out my husband's wishes in regard to my household. I had my reasons for doing so. A few days before my departure from Cauterets, Monsieur Decazes, a fine-looking young man with excellent manners, arrived there. I received few visitors. He knew my reader and came to call on her. Grief-stricken over the loss of his charming young wife, who had died after they had been married seventeen months, he was seeking some way of taking his mind off his sorrow. The object of his journey made him a sympathetic figure to us. He asked to be presented to me and appeared so unhappy that I did not feel justified in refusing his request. The day I met him he spoke of his wife, of his grief at losing her, and the need he felt of leaving France after such a shock. He wished me to obtain a post for him at my husband's court. I suggested that he secure an introduction through his father-in-law, Monsieur Muraire, when he returned to Paris, and promised that I would also use my influence with the King. My trips into the mountains were just beginning at that time. I saw the young man only once more and then did not hear him mentioned again.

Monsieur Decazes' father-in-law, who was president of the Court of Cassation, presented him to my husband as I had suggested, and the King on our return to Paris from the Pyrenees appointed him his secretary and sent him off immediately to Holland. I heard one day someone belonging to the Murat household say meaningly: "The

Queen of Holland saw a great deal of a certain young man while she was taking the waters and secured a post for him at her husband's court. That was very clever of her, I'm sure." I could not imagine that this bit of spiteful gossip referred to anyone I knew as slightly as I did Monsieur Decazes and I paid no attention to it. But when Monsieur Decazes returned from Holland to assume the duties of my private secretary the remark came back to me and I declined to accept him. The Queen of Naples one day when she was visiting me remarked: "Did you know that people are saying you have taken a fancy to that young man? I have had this repeated to me so many times that I wasn't sure myself about it, but I have just been watching you both, and I see there's nothing in the story. Nevertheless he is both vain and a braggart, for Fouché tells me that he goes about saying he is on the best of terms with you." Greatly astonished that the Chief of Police, instead of mentioning to me something that concerned me directly, should talk about it to persons who he knew would be only too glad to have reasons for criticizing me, I demanded that he explain such an absurd remark. He seemed embarrassed, put the blame on the conceitedness of the young man, on the bad effect such gossip had on my reputation, even on the fact that it was he who had asked the Princess Caroline to warn me. At last I became impatient with him for his evasions. On the other hand, how could I suspect the motives of Monsieur Decazes? I had only known him when bowed down with grief over the loss of his wife. Tears always make one think well of the person who sheds them. What reasons had I for believing that the sorrow of a stricken husband was a mask to conceal the vanity of a coxcomb? Being still young I had not lost faith in the existence of frankness and loyalty. A too justifiable distrust of human nature had not yet made me critical and suspicious of people's motives. Moreover, Monsieur Decazes as a member of my husband's household must have known the

King's character and been aware of our domestic difficulties, nor could there be any doubt that, like all Frenchmen living in Holland, he realized it was I who was in the right. My misfortunes made everyone sympathize with me, and the public hesitated to condemn my behavior.

In order to banish all doubts from my mind I thought it necessary to inform Monsieur Decazes of the remarks that were attributed to him. I expected that he would be deeply pained at such gossip. He defended himself more or less vigorously, but when he realized that people might believe he had enjoyed my favors for even a short time, a satisfied smile showed that his vanity was rather flattered, and betrayed the true character of a man whom I had considered honorable simply because he happened to be in distress. I admit that I was wrong in treating him in a manner he misinterpreted. After that he never appeared in my presence except when he came with messages from my husband. The King as soon as I refused to include Monsieur Decazes among my household granted him numerous favors.[13]

Nevertheless I soon learned the source of the various rumors that were being skilfully disseminated. In the pains taken to sully everything and everybody in any way connected with the Empress I recognized the hand of Fouché, one of the most ardent partisans of the Emperor's divorce. To serve his ends it was necessary to discredit all the members of the family he sought to force into retirement. My brother's position was impregnable; but how was I to escape the intrigues of a minister so well placed to produce evidence in support of his accusations? A woman in such cases is always helpless. The public knew the esteem the Emperor had for me. He had shown it on numerous occasions. In order to change his opinion of me and that of the general public nothing was simpler than to declare that I was involved in some entirely fictitious liaison. This maneuver and many others were nec-

essary in order that Fouché might have excuses for defending the idea of a divorce which France in general did not want. My mother was too popular. She was too good, too generous, too amiable, too willing to listen to every appeal for help and to aid anyone who might be in trouble. People could not dream of there being anyone kinder than she or imagine that a better or nobler person could exist. The public's affection was increased by the fear it had of losing her.

The Emperor, aware of this popularity, hesitated to secure a separation. It was in order to overcome his indecision that all sorts of schemes were set in operation. A great fuss was made about the Empress's enormous debts.[14] It was her kindness of heart that made her incur them and it was the poor who benefited by them. The knowledge of the extent of her generosity and the difficulties in which it involved her increased the public's affection for the Empress. Only the Emperor, passionately fond of order, was pitiless in his condemnation of her conduct in this respect. The end of the year was always the most painful moment for my mother, crushed beneath the weight of debts that fell due then, debts which she had allowed to accumulate through fear of confessing to her husband the extent of her extravagance. Having raged about them, the Emperor settled the debts. But the police found ways to revive his wrath by indicating that the Empress had only admitted half of the total of what she owed. Thus by sowing the seeds of dissension they hoped to bring about a separation.

I was still living at Saint Cloud when the Emperor left for Erfurt,[15] where all the reigning princes of Germany as well as the Emperor of Russia were to meet him. I witnessed the tears my mother shed when she thought about this journey. The Emperor reassured her, saying this gathering was purely political and had nothing to do with those family alliances which were being talked about. As a matter of fact the intimacy which existed at

the time between the Emperor Napoleon and the Emperor of Russia led people to suppose that a marriage between Napoleon and the Grand Duchess Catherine of Russia might take place. The result of the meeting at Erfurt was still further to increase the intimacy between the two monarchs. This was shown by all sorts of incidents. For example in a tragedy[16] given by French actors which they attended, at the line,

A great man's friendship is a gift of the gods,

Emperor Alexander leaned over and threw his arms around Emperor Napoleon, embracing him. The Princess of Baden was extremely popular at Erfurt. The Emperor of Russia was most attentive to her. Duroc, who told me about it, also spoke of Alexander's passion for another woman,[17] which had lasted fifteen years. He added: "He is the only man who might turn your Majesty's head. For your own peace of mind I hope you will never see him. In spite of the attention he showed your cousin I am sure if he met you he would be unfaithful to everything else he cared about."

"You are flattering me," I replied; "I do not believe that I know how to charm people."

"You do more than charm them," he continued. "You arouse their sympathy, and knowing the Emperor Alexander as I do, I am convinced that your character and your intellect would please him greatly. I must admit he has all the gallantry of a French knight. We no longer have that refinement of feeling and sentiment which he possesses and which is necessary to please you."

"Then I must take care never to see him," I exclaimed laughingly. "Judging by what you say we are so absolutely made for one another that we could not escape our mutual attraction. Although I am no great believer in the theory of love at first sight I consider it very fortunate that I did not happen to be at Erfurt. There at any rate Fate kept us apart."

I was completely ignorant of what was going on in the political world, and the Emperor preferred not to inform me of such matters, even when our own most vital interests were involved. I only learned that my eldest son had been made Grand Duke of Berg [18] when the master of ceremonies wrote my chief lady in waiting, asking when I could receive the visit of congratulation from the Senate. I sent my son to thank the Emperor and I received the congratulations regarding this event without feeling the least pleased about it. I can only explain this indifference on the ground that our rank was already so exalted that a duchy more or less did not make much difference. On the contrary I feared that the additional pomp connected with his new title might give my son false ideas regarding his importance in the world, for I specially desired him to have merits of his own, and constantly belittled all those gifts which his birth conferred on him, trying to persuade him that only what he accomplished by himself had any real value. Personally I frequently felt depressed at the thought of all these crowns held by our family and the idea that my sons were the sole heirs of all this power. I fancied that in time they would be separated from me forever, one ruling in the North, one in the South, and all the pomp and circumstance of royalty seemed to me to hold no promise of happiness either for me or for the rest of my family. I was never one of those to whom the wearing of a crown meant happiness. Thus our imagination frequently evokes misfortunes which never take place, while at the same time it does not foresee the other evils that Fate holds in store for us.

After the council at Erfurt the various generals set out for Spain. Caroline went to Naples, my mother and I took the Emperor to Rambouillet whence he left to join the army in Spain. The Empress was even sadder than usual on this occasion when she said good-by to her husband.

"Will you never stop making war?" she asked him. And I remember how the Emperor answered: "Do you mean to say you think I enjoy doing it? Don't you think I would rather stay where I have a good bed and a good dinner instead of facing all the hardships I have before me? Don't you think I am the same as other men? You're wrong. I know how to do other things besides wage war, but necessity and my duty toward France force me to do so. It is not I who command the course of events. I only obey."

This war began under such unfavorable auspices that everyone was vaguely worried about the outcome. The officers did not undertake it with that martial eagerness which I noticed on other occasions; they only obeyed orders. No one can witness the departure of the persons she cares about without feeling apprehensive. Perhaps this was particularly true in my own case, for being ill I was inclined to exaggerate all possible harm that the future might bring.

It was the fashion just then to collect carved Turkish jewels and I had a large number of them. I imagined that an amulet given by me might act as a talisman; at least I made myself think this, in order to give away a great many little gifts, so as to have an excuse for sending one to a particular person. Moreover, I said to myself: "Why should not my lot have certain compensations? If I am unhappy perhaps at least I can bring good luck to others. In that case I should not complain of my own fate." I gave all the Emperor's aides-de-camp these little amulets, recommending them to wear the object constantly if they wished to be safe from all danger.

When one's sentimental interests are at stake it is astonishing how the smallest things become important. For instance a number of my young ladies who were very much in love with their husbands, among them Madame Philippe de Ségur, came and asked me very seriously for one of my Turkish talismans. As it happened almost all

those who wore my amulets escaped every danger. Monsieur de Bongars, for instance, who was thought to be dead, found refuge in a convent. While he was still missing and when everyone was worried about his fate I always declared he would come back safely because he had one of my tokens. General Colbert lost his during an engagement. He wrote asking me to send another. I was about to do so when word reached me that this really distinguished man had been killed. The news was a shock to me and without intending to I exclaimed: "Why did he lose my amulet?" I realized then that I had come to attach a superstitious importance to something that at first had been merely an idle whim. After that I always sent a talisman to my brother at the beginning of each new campaign and I should have been worried if he had neglected to wear it constantly. Everywhere my uneasiness sought for some form of remedy, and I came to consider important things that my reason knew were futile.

The Emperor before he left had expressed his hope that I would return to Holland. After all I had endured I considered it cruel on his part to oblige me to go back to a man who had made me so miserable.

"Have I no family of my own?" I said to myself. "I seem to live here on sufferance only, whereas they ought to be glad to see me living away from my husband, on account of my reputation to say nothing of my health. I am not guilty of any of the faults of which I am accused. People know it and yet do not take my part. Instead of any longer hiding so jealously the way in which my husband has persecuted me, as I have done up to now, had I not better reveal my sufferings and make my misfortunes known to everyone? Should I not accuse him openly and demand just compensation for all the pain he has caused me? I took all the blame on myself, therefore it is I who have to pay the penalty for having done right. Now, when I complain, I am treated like a child who protests against his master's treatment."

Thus my distress made me unfair, for I should have remembered that after all I was only the Emperor's stepdaughter, whereas my husband was his own brother. He could not defend me without attacking Louis, and he was already doing a great deal for me in allowing me to remain so long in Paris when I should really have been in Holland. Doubtless it was on account of my children that the Emperor allowed me to remain so long in France in spite of all the efforts of my husband's family to make me leave sooner.

One day I received the visit of Grand Marshal de Broc, who, like the other Frenchmen, did not find his stay at the Dutch court any more agreeable on account of the additional titles he received there. He had as a matter of fact been commanded by a royal decree to give up his French citizenship. He refused to do so and enlisted as a volunteer in order to serve during the Spanish campaign under the orders of his brother-in-law the Duc d'Elchingen. He brought me news of something I already suspected. My husband's minister of justice was Monsieur Van Maanen. The King sent for him and gave orders to have everything possible done to discredit me in the eyes of the public. These were the instructions Monsieur Van Maanen received: "Spread reports that the Queen dislikes Holland intensely, that she is enjoying herself in France and that her conduct there is not at all respectable." The minister drew back in astonishment and said: "But, Sire, she is your wife and Queen of Holland. I cannot do such a thing as that."

"You are right," replied the King suddenly embarrassed; "I was merely testing your loyalty." The next day the minister was dismissed. He told the reason for his dismissal from office to everyone and among others to Monsieur de Broc, who repeated it to me.

How was I to believe that passion could so far blind an upright man as to induce him to act in such a way toward the mother of his children? I tried to doubt these stories. I preferred to believe that the minister was mak-

ing a false report rather than think that my husband was behaving in so abject a manner. I attempted to excuse the mad actions his jealousy made him commit by reminding myself of that kindness of heart which I had several times had occasion to notice in him. But the mere thought of a reconciliation was enough to make my heart sink within me. All the misery he had inflicted on me reappeared before my eyes. Overcome with fear the only explanation I could find for his conduct was the hatred I imagined he felt toward me, and I realized the necessity of avoiding placing myself within his grasp.

Since the Emperor's departure my mother was living at the palace of the Élysée. It had been decreed that Frenchmen who received foreign crowns were not entitled to any further income from French sources. Consequently I had no allowance with which to pay the expenses of my household, and in order not to be obliged to ask anyone for money I dismissed all my servants. I planned to live at the Élysée with my mother. This decrease in my wealth was the least of my worries. The Emperor heard what I had done and scolded me severely. He fixed my income at seven hundred thousand francs. As the war interfered with the prosperity of the Paris "luxury" trade the latter had decreased, and many workmen suffered from this depression of business. The Emperor, who knew how to attend to minor matters as well as to conceive and execute great enterprises, had six thousand francs given me per month in order that I might help the unemployed. Cardinal Fesch, Madame Mère and the Princess Pauline received the same sum, which, together with what they gave personally, amounted to quite an important amount.

As for me I gave as much as I could to relieve the suffering of the poor. I admit the fact quite simply. There is no merit in this if one has a large fortune and a high rank. In such cases it is not necessary, in order to assure one's popularity, to announce the fact in

the newspaper. None of us considered that we deserved the slightest credit for acting as we did, and the Emperor would have been angry had we thought so.

While the Emperor was busy with the war in Spain, Austria began to give him grounds for uneasiness and forced him to hurry back [19] without having concluded the other war, which was growing more serious. Monsieur de Talleyrand, who even after he had given up his post as Minister of Foreign Affairs continued to concern himself with what went on in Spain, had, so it was rumored, advised the policy that the Emperor followed at first. As soon as he realized that things were not going well, he began to make fun of a campaign which was not as successful as the others had been.

One day Madame de Rémusat called on me. She told me how much the reputation of Monsieur Talleyrand had suffered as far as the Emperor was concerned through people's repeating remarks he had never made and saying he had certain opinions which were not at all those he really held. She wept freely when she informed me how seriously Monsieur de Talleyrand felt his disgrace and declared she had not the slightest idea who could have sought to harm a man like Monsieur de Talleyrand, who was absolutely devoted to the Emperor's interests. She begged me to grant him an interview and to try to have the Emperor make peace with him.[20] I remembered that his attentions had flattered me while we were at Mayence. Since then I had met Monsieur de Talleyrand again, and he had not seemed to be aware of my presence. It was true, I had lost my son, and Talleyrand belonged to that class of people who disappear in the presence of misfortune. Nevertheless as one of the high dignitaries of the court he had called on me when my latest child had been born and in his carelessly polite manner had said: "It depends solely upon your Majesty how many princes we are to have. Our future happiness is entirely in your hands." Since then I had never even heard him spoken

of and I confess I was delighted to have the opportunity of revenging myself for this apparent neglect by doing him a kindness.

Monsieur de Talleyrand arrived a few moments after Madame de Rémusat had taken her departure. His attitude conveyed the hope that I would take his part, but he scarcely mentioned what he would like to have me do for him. He was no more cordial in his manner than usual, and I seemed the one who was asking a favor. The tears of Madame de Rémusat and her eagerness to defend her friend's interest contrasted strongly with the indifferent air of that haughty personage. I promised to speak to the Emperor about him that same evening and I am under the impression that Talleyrand obtained my promise without having asked me for it. Madame de Staël knew him well. Her portrait of him in the novel called "Delphine," under the name of Madame de Vernon, is a striking one [21] and I have on several occasions noted how closely it resembles the original.

In accordance with my promise I went that same evening to the Tuileries and assumed a chagrined manner in announcing to the Emperor that I had seen a person who was deeply grieved at being in disgrace. I spoke of that person's devotion to the Emperor and depicted his grief vividly; in fact, I lied so outrageously that I do not know how I managed to keep from smiling. When at length I mentioned the name of Monsieur de Talleyrand the Emperor burst out laughing.

"Oh, it's Talleyrand you've been talking about, is it?" he exclaimed. "Do you mean to say he called on you this morning?"

"Yes, Sire, and he seemed greatly distressed."

"But does he think I don't know all the remarks he has been making? He has been trying to make himself popular at my expense. I won't interfere with him any more. Let him keep on talking if he wants to."

"But, Sire, how can one repeat the remarks of a man

who never says two words in succession? To make such statements is pure libel."

"My daughter, you do not know society. My information is accurate. Though he may not talk against me in front of you he makes up for it at two o'clock in the morning when he is with Madame de Laval and the rest of them. As a matter of fact I am not taking any steps against him. Only I wish that he would not interfere with my affairs."

I do not know whether in spite of what he said the Emperor was touched by my description of Monsieur de Talleyrand's grief or whether other persons intervened. At any rate a reconciliation seemed to take place between the two men. To be sure Talleyrand was not again allowed to hold office, a fact which wounded him on account of his ambitious nature and which he never forgave. Even his post of Lord High Chamberlain was taken from him and given to Monsieur de Montesquieu. This made people say that the Emperor was too much inclined to humiliate his courtiers and not enough inclined to punish them.

Madame de Talleyrand, whom I knew only slightly, called on me one morning while her husband was still high chamberlain. "Knowing how kind you are," she said, "may I venture to ask you to include Monsieur de Talleyrand among the persons whom you invite to play whist with you at the Emperor's reception? He, as Lord High Chamberlain, is the one who arranges your table, he comes and takes your commands as to who are to be invited, and it is disagreeable to him, as one of the principal figures at court, never to be chosen himself by any of the princesses." I promised Madame de Talleyrand to do as she wished. It had simply never occurred to any of us to ask Monsieur de Talleyrand to play with us as we always believed he was too busy doing the honors.

Vague rumors announced the approach of a new war with Austria. What appeared at first sight to be a minor

incident caused us to believe these rumors were based on fact. Whenever an important reception took place there would always be card-playing after the theatrical performance or the meeting of the Emperor's ministers. We would go upstairs with the Empress to the Emperor's big study, where our tables were set out. Generally the Emperor did not play himself, and we and the Empress gave the High Chamberlain the names of the persons he was to invite to play with us. The persons chosen were generally the principal foreign ambassadors or the high court dignitaries. At the time of which I am now speaking the Emperor said to the Empress with an apparently indifferent air, "Who are your partners this evening?" and without waiting for a reply gave the names of three persons. He asked us the same question and also chose our partners. It was easy enough for us to guess that this was done in order to avoid having Monsieur de Metternich, the Austrian Ambassador, invited to play with us. Although he was generally invited at one of our tables, on this occasion he was obliged to play with the ladies in waiting.

Like Madame de Talleyrand, Madame de Metternich also came to see me to ask me to use my influence on behalf of her husband. The latter wished, in order not to make the change in his position too apparent, that I would ask my ladies in waiting not to invite him to play with them. Since he could not be one of our partners he preferred not to play at all. I with pleasure complied with Monsieur de Metternich's request. Indeed, I went further and at supper, where we each had our own table and where only the ladies were seated, I took advantage of the fact that the Emperor had not told us either whom we were to invite or whom we were to avoid, and made a point of asking Madame de Metternich to sit at my table the next time there was a reception. This rather compensated her for what had happened to her husband. Otherwise she ran the risk of being more or less ostra-

cized, for the Emperor's displeasure was contagious and he was not accustomed to see anyone take the part of a person with whom he was displeased. Consequently when he was walking about during supper and came to my table he passed by without saying a word when he noticed it was not arranged as he wished. I was not upset about this. Indeed, I rather enjoyed opposing him in this matter as I considered it unfair that Madame de Metternich, who had never had anything to do with politics, should suddenly have people turn their backs on her, instead of crowding around her as they had done a few days before, simply because the Emperor happened to be displeased with her husband. Too often courtiers seek to win their monarch's favor by exaggerating his attitude.

The Emperor suddenly left the court one day [22] without letting anyone know of his intentions. He was in the habit of doing this. He took my mother with him, and she wrote me to join her at Strasbourg and to remain there with her as long as hostilities lasted. I set out a few days later accompanied by my two children. Before I had reached Lunéville I already had news of a victory and as I entered Strasbourg a young page named Oudinot appeared at the door of my carriage and announced another one. Every day detachments of prisoners marched past under the surveillance of a couple of soldiers. All our troops were at the front, and it frequently happened that when we went out walking beyond Kehl we would find ourselves without any attendants in the midst of the prisoners. The idea that we might be in danger never occurred to us. I strolled about among them without feeling the least alarm and distributed money, especially to the convoys of the wounded. Marshal Kellermann, who commanded the garrison of Strasbourg, blamed me for taking such risks, especially as I was a member of the imperial family. But I considered that these men, defeated and unhappy, were not interested in anything except their own misfortunes.

The Queen of Westphalia, who had been obliged to leave Cassel, joined us, as did also the Princess of Baden. Our stay at Strasbourg still further weakened my health, and I allowed myself to be persuaded to try the waters of the little city of Baden, whose picturesque situation and good air might do me good. I did regain a little of my strength there. My children were with me. I was near enough my mother, who had remained at Strasbourg, for me to be able to see her occasionally.

Madame the Baroness de Krudener was at that time at Baden and occasionally came to call on the Princess Stéphanie. She talked well, and the stories of her experiences, which she enjoyed telling, were vivid and entertaining. Since my misfortunes my attitude in society had been listless and dull. I had no strength to indulge in small talk and hardly made even the most commonplace remark to the persons who were introduced to me. One evening, at the house of the Princess of Baden I let Madame de Krudener keep on talking without paying much attention to what she said, when suddenly my attention was aroused by her description of a young woman who lost someone who was dear to her and gave way to her sorrow. The close resemblance between the anecdote related by Madame de Krudener and my own feelings at the time of my son's death, as well as a thousand details which she had noticed, made a deep impression on me and made me live over again those sad moments. I was unable to control my emotion and burst into tears. Madame de Krudener sought to console me and from that time on became deeply attached to me. She often came to see me in the morning. We took long walks together, and her religious views although decidedly unorthodox appeared to me to be, at that time, quite sane and not dangerous. As she was devoted to the Queen of Prussia she was pleased to hear my flattering remarks about that ruler based on what my husband, who admired

her greatly, had told me. Endowed with an exceptionally kind heart, Madame de Krudener sought and found in the contemplation of God and in acts of charity those satisfactions which society so rarely affords. Since then she has yielded to an hysterical emotionalism, which has upset her entire life and made her into the head of a religious sect.

The Emperor, hearing I was at Baden, wrote me a letter in which he reproved me severely for having taken his nephews out of France without his permission. He asked me to send them at once to the Empress. I did so and a little while later followed them myself.

The war continued. Since all we desired was a speedy peace we thought after each new victory that the end was at hand. Having grown accustomed to the idea of the French armies being always victorious, the only thing we worried about was the lives of particular individuals in whom we were interested. During this campaign I had more than one cause for anxiety. My brother commanded the army of Italy, and we were chagrined to hear that his first battle [23] had not been successful. He confessed his disappointment in a letter to my mother and expressed himself in such vehement terms as to cause us to fear that he would in the future expose his own life in a still more reckless manner. Fortunately he quickly retrieved his initial failure, conducted his campaign in a most brilliant manner, inflicted almost daily defeats upon the enemy and finally joined the Emperor at the head of his triumphant forces. His arrival took place just after the Battle of Essling, which had cost us so dearly, and this reenforcement was as welcome as it was unexpected and necessary.

The Emperor did not seek to hide his satisfaction. He advanced to meet Eugène and embraced him tenderly in the sight of the entire army. When the Emperor heard that a junction between the two armies had been made

possible he exclaimed: "Such results are achieved only by a man who puts his whole heart into what he undertakes." [24]

All the official accounts and private letters we received confirmed the news of the death of General Durosnel during the Battle of Essling. We grieved on his account and on that of his young wife, to whom my mother prepared to break the news. I begged her not to do so at once. I refused to believe the news could be true. The Bulletin said that his body had not been found. Why not therefore give his wife a few more days of hope? My mother guessed what was in my mind.

"I am sure you gave him one of your talismans," she said, "and that is why you refuse to believe he has been killed."

"Yes, I admit that is the reason," I replied. "Until now I have been so happy for none of the people to whom I have given those keepsakes have been wounded. The thought comforts me and I cannot but feel that the reports must be mistaken and that General Durosnel is still alive."

My mother laughed at me and declared that a fact printed in the official bulletin must be true. A letter with the sad tidings was sent to the young woman, who nearly went crazy with grief. Every time the matter was spoken of I insisted that the man for whom our tears were being shed was still alive, yet although I continued to make these protests I was as much surprised as anyone else when my mother one day received a letter from General Durosnel, who had been taken prisoner by the Austrians. He had fallen during a charge, and several regiments had passed over his body. Camp followers came and stripped his belongings from him, and he had only managed to preserve my talisman by taking it off his watch and holding it in his hand. In his letter he requested my mother to express to the Queen of Holland his most profound gratitude as he was convinced he owed his life to the talisman which she had given him. It is easy to under-

stand how this incident strengthened my superstitious fancy. General Durosnel became even more superstitious than I, for he had casts made of the talisman and presented them to all his friends. The episode became known, and at the beginning of each campaign the young ladies came with renewed confidence to beg for amulets for their husbands. I never refused. It gave me much satisfaction to act as dispenser of good fortune to others.

CHAPTER IX

THE DIVORCE OF JOSEPHINE: THE MARRIAGE OF MARIE LOUISE: THE ABDICATION OF LOUIS (1809-1810)

A Trip to Plombières—Return to Paris—Madame de Barral—The Divorce Is Decided on—The Arrival of Eugène and Louis—Fêtes at Paris—December 15, 1809—With Josephine at Malmaison—Madame de Metternich—The Emperor's Dancing Lesson—Hortense as Viceroy—Life at Court—The Arrival of Marie Louise—The Emperor's Marriage—Hortense Leaves for Holland—At the Palace of Amsterdam and the Château of Loo—Departure for Plombières—Louis Abdicates.

THE Emperor's severe reproof having driven me from Baden, I went with my children to take the waters at Plombières. I had been to the same place with mother before I married. I believed I should recover there some of my lost health, some of that gay light-heartedness of youth, which I had not known for so long. When I returned I found nature had remained the same and only I had changed. Although the waters did me good I could not recapture those early emotions which a heart that has known sorrow can never feel again.

Mother joined me at Plombières. While we were there we received news of the successful battles of Raab and Wagram.[1] The former victory, won by the army corps which my brother commanded, was announced to us by Monsieur de La Bédoyère, who had become aide-de-camp to Marshal Lannes and whom Eugène had attached to his staff after the Marshal's death. My brother's continued successes were much commented on in the army. He was considered the Emperor's one legitimate successor. At the time of the armistice a young German student[2] was arrested during a parade when he was on the point of assassinating the Emperor. The generals and other officers, shocked that such an attempt should have

been made and alarmed at the idea of what might have happened, had considered seriously the situation arising from the absence of any direct heir to the imperial throne. They debated who might have been chosen as the Emperor's successor had the attempt succeeded, and unanimously voted for the Viceroy. Public opinion throughout France indorsed the verdict.

Rumors of this reached the Emperor and displeased him. They revived all his ideas concerning a divorce and later caused him to say to me during one of our conversations: "It became a necessity; public opinion demanded it." I believe also that Fouché, with his skill for intrigue and dislike for my brother, took advantage of the episode to bring the matter of a divorce again to the Emperor's attention. He perhaps even mentioned that my mother and I were deliberately engaged in promoting Eugène's popularity. At the same time a young Polish countess [3] whom the Emperor had met in Poland appeared in Vienna during the armistice. My mother knew that this person had been locked up with him in the palace of Schönbrunn although no one caught a glimpse of her. This unfaithfulness on the part of a husband to whom she was still tenderly devoted pained her deeply. The young woman became pregnant. The Emperor in spite of his suspicious character could not doubt that he was the father of her child, and from that moment on, the hope of having a direct heir in case he married again established itself firmly in his mind.

Continued rain forced the Empress to leave Plombières, but she felt so sad and so alone at Malmaison that I sent my children to keep her company. My health prevented me from going with them. For the first time in many months I seemed a little stronger. In spite of the bad weather the waters had done me good. To be alone there also agreed with me. Very few members of my household were in attendance. The old Chevalier de Boufflers and his wife, who were also alone, were the

only people I met. The wife sewed with me while the husband, still a poet and still a charmer in spite of his age, read us his latest works, described his travels or wrote us verses. My uneasiness had disappeared with the close of the hostilities. Once more I felt that peace had come back to my heart. I was so contented that I thought I was happy. I disliked the idea of returning once more into society. One day a letter from the Comte de Lavallette arrived, saying how much mother was missing me and what malicious gossip my continued absence had provoked.

"Is it possible," I exclaimed, "that a poor sick woman is not allowed to attempt to regain her health in peace? Why do people bother their heads about what I am doing? Who can be jealous of my quiet lot? Must I die in order to make myself uninteresting to these busybodies, who are as unjust as they are unfair, or better still have them forget me?"

I left the following day[4] and sought to console my mother, still deeply hurt over the Emperor's liaison with the young Polish lady. When she saw me she forgot that she had complained of my absence. But Madame Mère gave me a very chilly reception. Although I was accustomed to being unfairly treated by the Emperor's relatives, I was nevertheless surprised to have her reprove me for having left my mother, and for having remained alone at a watering-place, especially when my husband was not with me. To hear her no one would have suspected that at the same time her own daughter, the Princess Borghese, was alone at Aix-la-Chapelle. All that others did was right, all that I did was wrong.

The Emperor arrived at Fontainebleau and sent us word to join him there. My mother instead of being delighted felt worried about the future. Nevertheless her husband received her in a fairly[5] friendly manner. His greeting to me was distinctly cold. I had written him from Plombières asking permission to take a little trip

to Switzerland. He had not answered me. Therefore I had given up the idea. The first thing he said to me was, "Did you go to Switzerland without my permission?"

Although I assured him I had not done so he did not seem to believe me and I was forced to think he must have received false reports from the Minister of Police, who pursued his tactics of being hostile toward everything and everybody relating to the Empress. Thus rendered miserable by all sorts of unpleasant incidents I might have relapsed into my previous state of discouragement had I not had my mother with me.

The Emperor had made up his mind to obtain a divorce. He was only hesitating as to what means to employ. All his affection, all his tenderness toward my mother had disappeared. He became unjust and vexatious in his attitude. He seemed to feel that our family was a burden to him and he sought the society of his own relatives. He devoted all his time to them as though he were seeking to make us desire what he did not as yet dare to ask for himself, namely, a divorce. He did things he had never done before, as for instance going driving without the Empress and only accompanied by the Princess Borghese, whom he went to visit almost every evening. It was said that a certain woman [6] from Piedmont was the reason for this strange assiduity. I am inclined to think that the Emperor's behavior was merely an effort to distract his mind from what lay before him and to fortify his decision to obtain a separation from his wife. His mind was made up, but his heart still resisted. He sought to occupy it elsewhere. Perhaps he also was trying to prepare my mother.

Thus it was at Fontainebleau that the Empress again began to suffer. This love intrigue carried on in the very midst of our domestic life added new fuel to the rumors of an approaching divorce. As for me, I admit that I grew indignant as I watched my mother's tears flow and became aware of the methods being used to provoke them.

My pride was hurt; I wished that the divorce had already been pronounced. My family's rank, my children's future, nothing mattered as much as this humiliating position in which we now found ourselves.

"My brother and I are the only ones who have anything to lose," I said to myself. "He will be forced to give up the Italian throne. My children will no longer be heirs to the crown of France. But this sacrifice is one that is worth while making. Mother will be happier. Her career is over; at least let us hope that her life may not be shortened by her suffering. If only she could cease to care for the man who is hurting her. Let us forget all those splendid promises the future held for us and think only of insuring our mother's peace of mind."

This was how things stood when we returned to Paris.[7] One morning the Emperor sent for me. I was out at the time and when I came in he was at a cabinet meeting. I went in to see my mother and found her crying.[8] She told me that the Emperor had at last informed her he could no longer live as he was doing, that he had decided to divorce her. "Well, all the better," I replied quickly. "We shall all leave the court and you can lead a quieter life."

"But what will become of you, my children?"

"We shall go with you. My brother agrees with me. For the first time in our life, far from the crowd we can really know what it means to be happy."

This way of looking at things and these plans I made for the future in order to give her something with which to occupy her mind seemed to calm her feelings. When I left her she seemed resigned to her fate.

That evening at dinner a page brought me word the Emperor wished to see me. I went to him as determined as I had been in the morning not to display the least sign of weakness. A sort of pride seemed to strengthen my will. The Emperor stepped out of his study. His manner at first was abrupt; later it became more animated.

He said to me: "You have seen your mother. She has told you what has happened. My decision has been made. It is irrevocable. All France wishes me to secure a divorce. It demands this loudly. I cannot oppose my country's will. Therefore nothing will make me change my mind, neither prayers nor tears."

"Sire," I replied, in a calm, icy tone, "you are free to behave as you please. No one will seek to thwart you. Since your happiness makes this step necessary, that is enough. We shall know how to sacrifice ourselves on your behalf. Do not be surprised if my mother weeps. Indeed it would be more surprising if she did not do so, after fifteen years of married life. But she will submit to your will. We shall all leave your court remembering only the kindness you have shown us."

While I spoke, his face and expression changed. Hardly had I finished when abundant tears started from his eyes, and it was in a voice broken by sobs that he exclaimed: "What! All of you leave me? You will desert me! Don't you love me any more? It is not to insure my happiness but that of France that I am acting as I am. You ought to pity me for being obliged to sacrifice my most cherished affections."

At the sight of this emotion, which I felt was sincere, I was also touched. I was conscious only that he was unhappy. My pride gave way. I also wept, and my only thought was how I could console him.

"Be brave, Sire," I said. "We shall need courage ourselves at the thought of no longer being your children. But I assure you we shall know how to be brave. We shall understand that in leaving you we are removing an obstacle that stands in the way of your plans and hopes."

For a long time he protested against the idea of our departure, assuring me again that his actions were entirely based on political grounds, that my mother would continue to be his dearest friend, that he would not cease to consider my brother as his son, but that not being

Eugène's father he could not make him his heir. He said that the one way of assuring peace for France was to leave his throne to his own child: he had realized this some time ago, and only his affection for his wife had prevented him from asking for a divorce before.

"Do not believe," he said, "that court intrigues could influence me in any way. On the contrary at the time of the coronation, when I felt that there was a party hostile to your mother, not only did I cause her to be crowned, but I also had her anointed. At that time I hoped that by presenting my nephews as my heirs I should satisfy public opinion. But the men I had made powerful insisted that dynastic stability must be assured, and the common people, to whom I feel I am indebted, believe that I am the only protector of their safety and happiness. After me anarchy will break out again and France will lose the fruit of all she has worked so hard to obtain. Instead of that, if I leave a son brought up in accordance with my ideals, a son whom France will have formed the habit of considering as my heir, the country will be able to enjoy what I have done for her and at least she will benefit by my efforts on her behalf. I shall have borne the pain, others will reap the reward. As for you, your children's interests, which are what a mother should always consider first, ought to keep you here with me. Therefore I will not listen to any talk of your going away."

"Sire, my duty is to be with my mother. She will need me. We can no longer live near you. That is a sacrifice we must make. We are prepared to make it."

I returned to report to my mother the conversation that had taken place. Every day brought new conflicts. I persuaded her to let us leave everything behind and follow her, but the Emperor afterwards undid all my work. Frequently my heart bled at the thought of leaving my children. I had hoped to be allowed to keep them with me until they were at least seven years old, and my imagi-

PRINCE NAPOLEON LOUIS
(1804-1831)
Water-Color by Queen Hortense in the Collection of Prince Napoleon

nation already pictured all the compensations for my sacrifice which the intervening years might contain. I dreamed of a possible refuge far from the court, the humble pleasures of a family life which would afford my mother the rest she had long desired. There at least I should be able to console myself. Freedom from all anxiety would be my compensation for the sacrifice we had made. I was less clear about my brother's future. Knowing his character I could guess what his own conduct would be. But would his wife, brought up as she had been close to a throne, agree to renounce her position as willingly? Would she not feel too keenly the loss of those high hopes which she had held for the future?

The Emperor sent Eugène word by [optical] telegraph to come to Paris.[9] It was the first time he had been back to France since the day when as a colonel of the Guard he left it at the head of his regiment. I went to meet him, to inform him of the reason for his trip. Our carriages met at Nemours [December 5, 1809]. He left his carriage and came over to sit in mine. After we had embraced each other, weeping with joy as we did so, he said to me, "Is the reason for my return pleasant or unpleasant?"

I answered, "Unpleasant." And he guessed the rest. His first words were, "Has my mother courage to face it?"

"Yes."

"Very well. We shall all leave quietly and end our days more simply than we began them. But why did they make me marry a princess? My poor wife is the only one to be pitied. She has hoped that her children would wear crowns. She has been brought up to consider that important. She thinks I have been sent for to be named heir to the throne of France. But she will be brave. She loves me so dearly and she is so fine that she must know that if you do right you can never be unhappy."

While we were traveling back together I told him

everything about what had happened in Paris which I thought might be of interest to him. I had once more found a protector, a friend, and forgetting for a moment the unpleasant cause of his presence I gave myself the joy of unbosoming myself of all my troubles. He knew a good deal already, but when he found me so altered in appearance he guessed the rest, and realized the intensity of my sufferings. He admitted to me that he would have had difficulty in recognizing me.

Eugène told me of the charm that enveloped his own home-life, of that perpetual atmosphere of harmony which was a refuge for him after all his labors. How different our fates had been! All good fortune seemed to have been allotted to him, yet his good fortune became all the dearer to me, for I felt that in a way my own suffering had to some degree made it possible. Far from complaining of what had befallen me I prayed Heaven to continue to send me all the misfortunes of life and to spare my brother.

We arrived at the Tuileries. Eugène immediately went up to see the Emperor, and I returned to the Empress. The latter was deeply moved at the thought of meeting her son again, whom she had not seen since they had met at Munich. She had never doubted that either he or my children would succeed the Emperor, and all these hopes had suddenly vanished. She grieved solely on our account for, as far as she was concerned, her mind was already made up. She kept constantly before her those ideas that strengthened her decision: she would remain the friend of the man she loved; she would continue to live in the same country that he did; her own existence would be simpler; above all, the knowledge that she was doing her share to insure the happiness of France and of the Emperor. She was determined not to live far away from him, and she waited anxiously to know my brother's opinion on this point, which she feared might be the same as mine.

The Emperor and Eugène joined us, coming down by the private stairway. Our meeting was a painful one. All eyes overflowed with tears. Even the man who when I had seen him was absolutely decided seemed ready to change the resolutions he had formed. But my brother and I assured him the time for that was past. Now that we knew what was in his mind the Empress could no longer be happy with him. We had not taken any action so long as we considered the matter merely a court intrigue or a family cabal, but now that he had explained all to us we felt obliged to leave him. The Emperor repeated to my brother what he had already said to me. He wished everything to take place amicably. The Empress should not lose either her position or the respect he had for her. My brother insisted that the separation be a complete one. "Otherwise we might find ourselves in an ambiguous position," he said. "In the end my mother might prove to be in your way. People would dare attack our family, thinking we had been dismissed from court. Our simplest actions would be considered prearranged plans. Even your enemies would hurt our cause by passing themselves off as our defenders, and lead you to suspect us unjustly. It is better to leave nothing behind. Tell us a spot where, far from the court and its intrigues, we can help our mother bear the weight of her misfortune."

The Emperor protested against the poor opinion we seemed to have of him and said, speaking in a serious thoughtful way that showed he was deeply moved: "Eugène, if ever I have been useful to you in your career, if you have looked upon me as a father, do not abandon me. I need you. Your sister cannot leave me either. She owes that to her children, who are my nephews. Nor does your mother wish you both to go away. With all your exaggerated ideas you will increase her unhappiness. Indeed I may say more—you should remember the verdict that history will pass on your mother. You must

remain with me unless you wish it to be said: 'The Empress was repudiated, abandoned, and perhaps deserved such treatment.' Is not her attitude a far nobler one if she continues to live near me, to keep her rank and her position, to prove by doing so that our separation was due entirely to political necessities and one to which she consented? She will thereby deserve more than ever the praise, love and respect of the nation for whose good she sacrificed herself."

We did not know how to reply to these new arguments, as powerful as they were unexpected. We were won over by the Emperor's solicitude for his wife's reputation at the very moment he was leaving her. The attitude of the children toward their mother had to be the same as that of the husband toward his wife. They would have done wrong not to follow his example. Instead of seeking to oppose the Emperor's wish that we stay at court we were prepared to agree to it, since by doing so we assured our mother so many advantages, a quiet life such as she liked, an opportunity to satisfy her own tastes, and a noble and worthy memory in the minds of all. Our desires were subordinated to her interests. Already we prepared to accept our new position, which placed us on an equal footing with the crowd that had before been at our feet and made us nobodies still living on amid the same surroundings where they had formerly been all-powerful.

Once the sacrifice had been resolved upon, the only thing left was to carry it out. The Emperor's family met to hear what had been decided. Their joy was apparent in spite of their efforts to conceal it. Although pretending to be touched by what was happening to the Empress, every time they turned to us, of whom they had always been jealous, they betrayed their true feelings by their satisfied and triumphant manner.

It seemed I was always to be obliged to face several troubles simultaneously. Now I heard that my husband

had come back. The Emperor, doubtless with a view to bringing about a reconciliation between Louis and myself, had urged me to write the King about what was going on. I did so. In reply I received a long review of all the misfortunes of which I had been the cause, ending by the expression of a wish, which he considered was probably in keeping with my own desires, that we secure a judicial separation.

After a lunch which the Princess Pauline gave for the Emperor at Neuilly,[10] the Emperor called me over to him, and while the guests were all in the garden slipped his arm through mine and led me a little away from the rest of the people, saying as he did so: "Your husband arrives tomorrow. I know he intends to live at his mother's house. I do not approve of that. Here in France I have the right to oblige him to go to his own house, but I know how unhappy his disagreeable character makes you. Tell me, would you feel badly if I ordered him to go to your home?"

"Sire," I exclaimed, "I lack the courage to bear this continually renewed suffering."

"Yet," he replied, "Louis is kind. It is true nobody can live with him, but that is because your gentle nature does not sufficiently curb his faults. An honest woman should always rule her husband."

"Sire, I beseech you, let him do as he wishes."

The Emperor appeared undecided. We rejoined the rest of the party, and as a matter of fact my husband, instead of returning to his palace, went to his mother's house.[11] I admit, in spite of all the malicious gossip this caused, I congratulated myself that he had done so, so much did his presence alarm me. Our not living together was the first indication the public had that we were not a devoted couple.

The children always spent their evenings with their father. The youngest one, who had not been well for several days, was not able to go out. My husband lost

his temper and declared openly that I wished to prevent his seeing the little boy. He came alone in the evening to see the baby in his bed in order to convince himself that his son was really ill.

Between married people who are unhappy together everything becomes a reason for quarrels and discussions. The Emperor had insisted that my husband make me a formal visit, and I returned his call. We occasionally met at the Tuileries and, as I have heard since, he said that he found me so altered in appearance that he felt sorry for me. The King fell ill. I went to see him and entered without being announced, anxious to obtain news of his health. The next day when I went back he refused to receive me. I was much upset. At last in response to our repeated demands the Emperor called a family counsel to pass on the question of our separation. Neither side was able to present any serious grounds, and the Emperor said several times: "They are children. There isn't as much as a sheet of paper between them. They must make up their quarrel."

During this period [12] many fêtes were being held in Paris to celebrate the Peace with Austria. Everyone was aware that the Emperor's divorce was about to take place, but in accordance with her usual line of conduct the Empress attended all the receptions wearing the imperial crown, although convinced that in a short time it would be worn by another. At this time and up to the moment of the divorce the kings of Saxony, of Würtemberg and of Bavaria were in Paris. The Empress received them. My brother had gone to meet the King of Bavaria to inform him of the separation. The King was deeply affected by the news. He regretted his arrival just at this time, which made it seem as though he had come to act as a witness. He wished some definite arrangement to be made as regarded the Viceroy's future. The Emperor was quite agreeable to the idea and proposed to my brother a kingdom made up of the Illyrian

provinces, the Tyrol or any other region he preferred. My brother always replied, "I am asking for nothing at all; do not trouble about me."

The Empress also insisted that something be done about her son, as his title of Prince of Venice did not assure him the Italian crown, which belonged by law to the Emperor's second son. But the Viceroy was positive in his attitude that he was not prepared to accept a throne or any other advantage that would seem to have been a ransom for the mother's misfortune.

Finally on December 15, 1809, the day of the divorce, all the family assembled in the Emperor's principal study, where he had been alone with the Empress.[13] Each took his place in accordance with his rank. The High Chancellor and Count Regnaud de Saint-Jean-d'Angély came in, and both remained standing. The Emperor took up a piece of paper and began to read in a clear and steady voice. When, however, he came to the phrase "she has made my life more beautiful for fifteen years" [14] his emotion was evident. The Empress then read her statement. Tears prevented her from completing it. She handed it to Count Regnaud, who finished it although he too was weeping. The official report of the proceeding having been drawn up and signed by all those present, the Emperor embraced the Empress and led her to her apartment. A little later he came to fetch me and took me to her. I found her exhausted and overcome with the strain she had been under. I felt it was necessary to keep up her courage to the end. In order to do so I reminded her of the misfortunes of that other queen who had preceded her in this same palace and had left it only to mount the scaffold. I pointed out how much more fortunate she was and dwelt on the consolations that still remained to her. Finally her courage seemed to revive. On the preceding day [15] my brother had gone to the Senate to announce the divorce and declare that it took place with our consent.

The next morning early I went to see my mother. Her drawing-room was filled with ladies in waiting, weeping over her departure. I feared the effect this emotion would produce on her, although I felt that the worst was already over. To leave a court is not the same as leaving a place where you have been happy. I led my mother to her carriage [16] while the Emperor was attending his cabinet meeting. He had already said good-by to her. I was not present when he did so, but I can imagine how heartrending it must have been.

Our trip to Malmaison was a sad and silent one. When my mother entered that house where she had been so happy her heart was heavy with grief.

"If he is happy," she said to me, "I shall not regret what I have done." As she spoke her eyes constantly filled with tears.

The day after she had left the Tuileries the Emperor came to see her.[17] Her attitude in receiving formally the man who only twenty-four hours before had been her husband was widely commented on. The Emperor took her hand and chatted with her for a long time as they walked about near the château. Every day he sent her a messenger bearing a letter in which he complained of being lonely and said how much he was missing her. He went to the Trianon and asked us to come and see him there. I accompanied my mother. The interview was a touching one.

The Emperor wished my mother to stay to dinner. As usual he sat opposite her. Nothing seemed to have changed. The Queen of Naples and I were the only other guests. The Emperor's pages and the Préfet of the Palace were as usual in attendance. No one spoke. My mother was unable to swallow a mouthful, and I looked as though about to faint. The Emperor several times wiped his eyes without saying a word. We left immediately after dinner.

My mother afterwards reminded me of the tears she

had seen in the eyes of the man for whom she still cared. She seemed to find a moment's comfort in perceiving that he shared her regrets for the past. But time went on. Letters became more rare, and she still waited for them. There was a little room from which she could get a view of the highroad. Every time she heard that there was to be a hunt in the forest of Saint-Germain she would remain at the window till she had seen the Emperor's carriage pass and repass. I began to fear that her sacrifice was costing dearer than I had at first thought it would. My brother and I united our efforts to find something to amuse her. She appeared to resign herself little by little to her fate, though for a long while the slightest sign of interest on the Emperor's part was sufficient to satisfy her and renewed her courage. Moreover, Malmaison was constantly full of a crowd of people who, whether they were petty tradesmen or cabinet ministers or Marshals of France, brought her the homage of their respectful devotion. When the weather became colder she expressed a desire to return to the Élysée.[18] The Emperor consented and came to see her there once or twice.

I had not left my mother's side for a single day when I received from the Emperor the notification of my appointment as *princesse protectrice* of the school for the daughters of members of the Legion of Honor. He had from the first intended I should hold that post, which attracted me all the more as it placed the daughters of the heroes of France under my protection and guardianship. I called one evening on the Emperor to express my thanks. He appeared annoyed that I had not returned before to see him. He thought I was angry, and I was only sad, which was all the more natural after that fruitless effort on my part to obtain a separation, when he had indicated that he wished on the contrary to reconcile me with the King.

I constantly found myself having to bear both my wor-

ries in regard to my husband and his own troubles resulting from what was taking place in Holland. Although I knew nothing about politics I grasped the fact that the King wished to be an independent ruler, free to promote the happiness of his subjects as he thought best, and without being forced to submit to the wishes of the court of France. This was doubtless a very natural desire and one which sprang from an almost servile attachment to what he considered his duty, to those new obligations assumed on ascending the throne. But how could he expect to maintain his independence at a time when all the other sovereigns of Europe were forced to agree even against their will to the wishes of the man who had conquered them? I said one day to one of the cabinet ministers who had come to complain about the Emperor's severity that he must know I never took any part whatsoever in politics, and that my husband was receiving bad advice. Perhaps, had he possessed a force capable of resisting that of the Emperor, he might have separated the politics of Holland from those of France if he judged this was advisable, but since he was not strong enough to do so he was obliged frankly to ally himself with France. If he did so, even though it proved a costly operation, Holland might hope to secure certain advantages from the continually growing power of its neighbor. But if he acted differently the Emperor might become irritated and annex a country which did not fall in with his plans. Thus the King, though acting with the best of intentions, might do the greatest harm possible to Holland by compromising her independence. This was the one and only talk regarding affairs of state I ever had with any of the Dutch ministers. I ought probably to have shown more interest in public matters which affected my family, but I thought they were no concern of mine, a convenient idea when one has a lazy mind which places its conception of happiness elsewhere than in rank and power.

My mother was much interested to know who was to

take her place. She inquired carefully regarding all the eligible princesses in Europe. One day Madame de Metternich called and spoke to her at length about the Archduchess Marie Louise. My mother seemed to consider her the most suitable person the Emperor could choose. Madame de Metternich wrote her husband about this conversation. She received an answer, which she showed me on account of the liking she had had for me ever since I took her part when everyone else was avoiding her. According to this letter her husband had shown his sovereign the benefits that would accrue to the states over which he ruled, and the happiness his daughter would have if she were chosen by the Emperor Napoleon as his wife. The Emperor of Austria seemed quite willing to bestow the hand of the Archduchess on Napoleon if he asked for it. Only his wife, the Empress, made certain objections. A few moments' conversation with Monsieur de Metternich was enough to overcome these. This letter had been shown that morning to Monsieur de Talleyrand. Without doubt the Emperor was informed of its contents, for I heard from my brother that he had been ordered by the Emperor to present to the Prince of Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Ambassador, a formal request for the hand of the Archduchess Marie Louise.

A few days before, a cabinet meeting had been called [19] to discuss whether it would be preferable to choose the Russian or the Austrian princess. The opinion of the cabinet was divided. Those who like my brother preferred the Austrian gave as their reason the fact that there was no point of contact between Russia and France and not the slightest danger of hostilities arising between these two countries. It was far more useful, they said, to fuse into a close alliance the interests of Austria and France, which had in the past provoked friction and which continued to offer constant possibilities of conflict. This last argument proved convincing, the more so as there was the question of the difference of religion, it

being understood that a Russian princess would not change her faith and it would not do to allow a priest of the Greek Church to come between husband and wife. It was therefore decided that the Archduchess Marie Louise should become Empress of France, and that the Queen of Naples was to go to the Austrian frontier to meet her. The Prince of Neuchâtel was sent to convey the Emperor's procuration to the Archduke Charles, who was to represent the Emperor of the French at the ceremonies in Vienna.[20]

As for the Emperor his attention was entirely taken up by the thought of his young wife. It seemed as though he could never obtain enough details about her. Whenever a page or an aide-de-camp returned after taking a letter or a present to her he would be overwhelmed with questions. All agreed in saying that she had a good figure, was blonde, had a fresh complexion and a pretty foot, but no one dared claim that she was pretty. Monsieur de Talleyrand one day repeated to me one of these reports which a young aide-de-camp had made to the Emperor in his presence.

"Tell me frankly," said the Emperor, "how do you like Empress Marie Louise?"

"Very much, Sire."

"Very much does not convey any information. Let me see. How tall is she?"

"Sire, she is about as tall as"—here he hesitated a moment and added—"as tall as the Queen of Holland."

"Ah, that is very nice. What color is her hair?"

"Blond, about like that of the Queen of Holland."

"Very well, and what sort of skin has she?"

"Very white."

"And her complexion?"

"Very clear, like that of the Queen of Holland."

"She looks like the Queen of Holland, does she?"

"No, Sire, she does not, and yet as regards everything you asked me, I answered truthfully."

The Emperor dismissed him, shook his head and said: "I have trouble making them say a word. I know that my wife must be very homely for not one of these young wretches has been able to say that she was pretty. Well, as long as she is good-natured and bears me many sons I shall love her as though she were the most beautiful woman on earth."

The choice of a chief lady in waiting for the new Empress was a question that caused much talk among all the courtiers. She had to be a woman of absolutely irreproachable character. All the members of the oldest families of the Faubourg Saint-Germain claimed this position, which belonged to them by right. They declared the niece of the unfortunate Queen of France [Marie Antoinette] could have as her close attendant only someone who had served the cause of her aunt. On the other hand, the military men and the nobles of the new régime distrusted the members of the old court party and feared the snubbing they might receive from the old aristocrats. The Emperor's choice was the wisest possible. No one had thought of it and everyone approved it. The Duchess of Montebello had, since the death of her husband [Marshal Lannes] lived in retirement, her only interest being the education of her children. Admired by all, still young and beautiful, her appointment proved the Emperor did not forget those heroes who had died for their country's cause and that he did not want to place near his young wife any person whose reminiscences might have caused her not to like all French people equally.

Never before had such luxury been displayed as that which was to accompany the Emperor's marriage. Nothing seemed too fine for the Empress, and the Emperor took pains over the smallest details of everything that concerned her as though he had nothing else to think about.

The King and Queen of Westphalia, the Queen of Spain, the King and Queen of Naples, the Duchess of

Tuscany, the Prince and Princess of Baden, the Princess Pauline and my husband met in the evening at the Tuileries. I spent my time between my mother and these gatherings, which the presence of my husband made rather embarrassing for me. At one of them which I happened to attend the Emperor was in especially high spirits. "From now on," he declared, "people must find me charming. My serious and solemn manner will not please a young woman. She probably enjoys the pastimes of youth. Come, Hortense, you are our Terpsichore: teach me how to waltz."

The proposition of the Emperor struck us as so amazing that we burst out laughing. It was not a joke. He meant what he said seriously. I gave him lessons for two evenings. He had little natural skill and laughed himself at his clumsiness. Pretty soon he grew tired of the idea saying: "Let each age do what suits it best. I am too old. Moreover I can see that I was never meant to be a success as a dancer."

My brother had gone back to Italy, whence he was to return with his wife to attend the wedding. I received a letter from him which pained me deeply as it anounced that General de Broc, who had participated in the German campaign under his orders, had fallen severely ill while at Milan. I could not keep this bad news from my dear friend. She immediately left to nurse her beloved husband, but at Chambéry she met my brother and my sister-in-law, who informed her of the General's death. She was mad with grief. I shared her distress as though it had been my own. Never did I see a more deep or enduring sorrow. It did not, however, affect either her health or her beauty. This doubtless was the happy result of the tears which she was able to shed freely.

I had never met my sister-in-law before, but had been constantly hearing about her. The happiness she had brought my brother was enough in itself to make me fond

of her. I went to meet her on the way to Fontainebleau, and found her much as she had been described. Her beauty and the freshness of her complexion were remarkable. Although very tall and thin her figure was so well proportioned that she did not seem in the least grotesque. She was always at ease and most considerate toward others. In every respect she made an ideal princess, and I have heard this opinion repeated by others, even by the Emperor himself. We became sincerely attached to one another, as much so as two people can be who have common interests and the same reactions, but lack any knowledge of each other's early lives, which have been spent in different surroundings. Nor can a person who has known only happiness understand another whose life has been darkened by constant misfortunes.

The Empress Josephine went to Navarre [a château near Evreux] in order not to be too close to Paris during the wedding festivities. According to our policy of appearing entirely to approve of the marriage, my brother and I had agreed to be present. In order to do so we first went to Compiègne with the Emperor and all his family.[21] The imperial court was at this time a remarkable spectacle. Nowhere in Europe could be found a more numerous gathering of women distinguished by their beauty and intelligence. The Emperor's officers had married into all classes of society. They had been influenced neither by family nor by fortune but entirely by the personal qualities of their companions. Italy and Germany had also contributed to the French court all they possessed in the way of charm, wit and beauty, for the princesses occupying foreign thrones sought to surround themselves with the élite of their new dominions. No assembly will ever compare, I believe, with this one as a picture of youth, riches, and all the forms of physical beauty and all the delights of the mind.

The Empress was approaching Compiègne. Every day the Emperor received a letter from her, which he

seemed to find satisfactory. Her passage everywhere was greeted with joyful demonstrations and she must have enjoyed this continuous ovation. As for me, yielding to my habit of judging others by myself, I found myself pitying her. I remembered my own marriage, the ideas I had held as to the happiness it was to bring me. I thought she might hold these same ideas. How, I said to myself, can she, after having been brought up to hate the enemy of her family and of her country, expect to love the Emperor? It is impossible. The match is a purely political one. I pictured her as being unhappy and thought of her as a victim. She began to attract me and I found myself waiting for her arrival as one does for that of someone whom you look forward to meeting. I did not remember sufficiently that for a princess ambition is the most powerful of all emotions and the highest throne is always the one to which she most ardently aspires. She expects it will bring her the greatest happiness, since she knows in advance that her heart has nothing to say about choosing the man she marries. It is a wise and necessary education that emphasizes the importance of the grandeur that lies before her and the noble use she may make of the power she will be called upon to wield; in other words, that teaches her how to make the most of what Fate holds in store for her.

At Compiègne, although my husband and I lived under the same roof, we saw each other only at night in the Emperor's drawing-room where all the family generally gathered. He never spoke to me, and indeed I did not seem to be included in the subjects in which he was interested. One day the King of Westphalia sent me an invitation to lunch the following day. I accepted and found myself with my husband and the King and Queen. I realized that the meeting had been planned in advance. The very thought of a possible discussion made me feel uneasy. However, the ordeal had to be faced. The King and Queen left the room, and we were alone.

"Madame," said my husband, "for a long time I have been wishing to speak to you. The Emperor was unwilling to agree to a separation which we both desired. Therefore it appears you cannot be free of your husband."

"What happiness do you expect to find in a reconciliation?" I replied.

"I know there is no hope for one and it is not that I am asking. But you are Queen of Holland. It is there you should live, and I will not allow you to do otherwise."

"What reasons make you wish to have me there? If you are so alarmed at the idea of my being at the Emperor's court I do not insist on remaining here. My mother lives in retirement. I am prepared to stay with her. I can do nothing to make you happy. Let me end my days quietly. Do not think any more about me. Imagine that I have died."

"That is quite different," he answered promptly. "Look at what the Emperor of Austria has done. He remarried immediately." [22]

I do not know how this last sentence escaped him, but it strengthened my conviction that this love of his for me, which I had heard so much about, had ceased to exist. In its place was another feeling so acutely hostile that I had reason to fear it. All his conversation was about the necessity of my returning to Holland and the power he possessed to make me do so.

Later I was forced to resist the most pressing entreaties on the part of my husband's family. I replied to each of them that I believed he was capable of doing anything in order to hurt me, but that if he were not king of the country in which he lived I might be willing to go there in the hope of obtaining from some all-powerful judge at least a recognition of my rights. But what could I expect at the hands of a man who treated me as though I were his bitterest enemy? I wrote the Emperor a despairing letter. He did not answer me.

Finally even my brother undertook to patch up a partial truce. I related to him in detail all that I had endured. But how was I to make him understand? One must have lived through such tortures in order to conceive them. People fancy that emotion blinds persons who complain. In attempting to save their reputation perhaps one brings about their death. Eugène kept repeating to me: "Make this last effort on account of what people will think. They do not know how many times already you have tried to improve this impossible character. You are blamed because people do not know you better. Show how brave you are, and if you cannot win from your husband a little domestic happiness, at least your perseverance will have given you the right to live alone, quiet and respected by all."

It is difficult to be so sure you are right as to be able to resist the advice of a dearly loved brother, especially when you value his approval, but in this case he was wrong. He could not grasp that after all my vain attempts, which only I knew about, I had no health, strength, or hope left to enable me to try again. Thus sunk in a state of dull discouragement, haunted by the constantly recurring idea that no one, not even those I was fondest of, cared what became of me, I finally gave my consent to this departure, which so many people desired. I prepared to return to the spot where I had suffered so much, as a condemned man goes forward to his doom.

My brother, who finally became uneasy when I ceased to make any objection to what was proposed, wished himself to establish the conditions under which I was to return to Holland. It was agreed that I was to live under the same roof as my husband; he was to allow me to visit health resorts whenever necessary; I was to be permitted to choose my own attendants, for none of my French ladies in waiting could accompany me. I obtained permission to leave my youngest child in Paris on account of

his delicate constitution, and I made my preparations to leave immediately after the wedding, taking Madame de Boubers and Monsieur de Marmol with me.

My domestic troubles interested no one except myself. The entire court was taken up with the prospect of the coming festivities and the Empress's arrival. Many discussions took place between the kings and the princesses in regard to the proper ceremonial to be observed on her arrival.

I sometimes smiled to see so much importance being attached to matters which to me appeared to have so little. A heart that suffers realizes the futility of all material things. No decision had yet been arrived at, when the Emperor acted in a way of which everyone approved.[23] He left one morning in a barouche accompanied only by the King of Naples to drive out to meet the Empress. The meeting took place near Noyon. The Emperor stopped his carriage, stepped directly into that in which the Empress was seated and embraced her tenderly. The Queen of Naples was with them. At seven o'clock in the evening we all took our places in full court dress at the bottom of the grand stairway to welcome the newcomer. We kissed her in turn, but hardly had a chance to do more than catch a glimpse of her as she passed. After going through the gallery where all the local authorities and the court were assembled she disappeared, and we did not see her again until the next morning. She received us cordially. Her manner was gentle and kindly, although somewhat embarrassed. We were all pleased with her appearance.

The court then went to Saint Cloud,[24] where the civil marriage took place on April 1. A stately procession proceeded from there to the Tuileries.[25] I was with the Queen of Spain and the Grand Duke of Würtemberg. We preceded the Emperor's carriage. I shall not describe the scene. The contemporary newspapers have probably done so.

During the Empire the public ceremonies were always impressive and beautiful. The Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, already begun,[26] had provisionally been completed in wood. It was easy to imagine the magnificent effect it would later have produced.[27] Along the way the crowds seemed to me rather reserved. The common people did not display much pleasure at seeing an Austrian woman again on the throne. On the other hand Paris society, which had mustered in full force in the gallery of the Louvre, gave way to the most lively enthusiasm, some of its number because they recalled old and dear memories, others because they hoped the marriage would insure a lasting peace, or because they were stirred by that emotion which any spectacular and brilliant sight can arouse.

Before proceeding to the temporary chapel the Emperor and Empress rested in their apartments. The imperial mantles were brought from Notre Dame where they had been kept since the coronation. The Empress put on the one which my mother had worn, and the Queen of Spain, the Queen of Westphalia, the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, the Princess Pauline and I carried the train. The Queen of Naples, the wife of the Viceroy of Italy, and the Princess of Baden marched ahead bearing the candles and different insignia. In this order we passed through the gallery and arrived at the room which had been arranged as a temporary chapel.[28] The court and the diplomatic corps were in stands erected around the walls. The ceremony was rather short. The spectators frequently glanced at my brother and me, trying to see what our impression was. This movement of curiosity embarrassed me although I knew that no emotion would betray itself on my features. Indeed, I sincerely believed that my mother was happier in her quiet retreat than surrounded with all this pomp. I could not regret for her sake what I personally did not envy.

My husband left after the marriage, sending me word

by Madame de Boubers that he was preceding me but that he counted on my keeping my promise. Madame de Boubers told me that as he was going away his sisters had tried to persuade him to take his son, who happened to be present, with him, but that he had refused, saying: "The Queen has given me her promise. She will not break it." I was grateful to him for this token of confidence. While I was making my final preparation for my journey, Madame de Broc, overcoming her own grief, hurried to see me.

"What is this I hear?" she exclaimed. "You are going back to Holland? Do you want to die? I who so often urged you to fulfil your duties no matter how disagreeable they might be, I now implore you to relinquish all such ideas. Do not let your despair lead you to sacrifice yourself to such an extent." She guessed how discouraged I was and knew that for some time I had not been telling her my troubles in order not to add to hers.

"I have given my promise, my dear Adèle." This was all I could say and we separated overwhelmed with grief.

Monsieur de Flahaut had been ill in Vienna after the war for a long time.[29] He was still far from well since his return and made a great effort in order to come to see me as soon as he heard what I intended to do. His tears, his profound distress, his renewed declarations of eternal devotion, everything about the way in which he bade me farewell betrayed a depth of feeling which I still refused to admit, and this affection in spite of myself made me still cling to life and regret my courage, since the latter, which enabled me to leave Paris, at the same time hastened a certain and speedy death.

My mother was at Navarre. I did not have the strength to go and see her. I wrote her. I cannot tell whether in my letter she felt how completely I was surrendering myself to my fate, but she was unhappy and uneasy over the decision I had made.

I went to Compiègne.[30] The Emperor was utterly

absorbed by his new wife. The princes and princesses, yielding to the appeal of amusements, dances, and all those tumultuous pleasures which found expression there, spent their time trying to outshine one another in popularity, magnificence, and pomp. The whole court was making merry. I alone was sad, an alien to all my surroundings. My wretchedness made me stand aside in the midst of all these festivities. Their noise and sparkle only rendered my misery more acute and deepened its somber glow. The Emperor's sisters, now that I was at last on the point of going away, took more pains to make themselves agreeable to me than they generally did.

They did not need actually to say to me: "Be brave." Their highly satisfied air was sufficient to prevent my pride from giving any sign of my distress. But if one of them had gone so far as to press my hand affectionately, I should not have been able to stand it, and my tears would have betrayed my hidden anguish.

At last it was necessary to bid the Emperor and Empress farewell. I wept as I did so. The Emperor seemed touched by the sight of my tears.

"Why are you leaving so soon?" he inquired.

I did not reply and hurried to my carriage without seeing anybody.

My son and Madame de Boubers were my only companions. As we left [31] Compiègne I breathed more freely. I had no longer to curb my emotions, and this was a relief after all the disagreeable things I had lately been forcing myself to do. The journey was a mournful one. It seems as though the only pleasure a soul in pain can feel is the memory of what it has passed through already. When I caught sight of the Dutch guard waiting at the frontier I recalled my earlier journey; then I had thought I deserved to be pitied. Nothing had changed. I was again on the same spot, but on the former occasion I had had my son. Now he had ceased to live; and what sort of existence remained for me? Superstitious ideas always

occur to one in connection with any deep sorrow. I felt I was about to die and a funeral we encountered at the entrance to the first village convinced me of the fact.

I reached Utrecht.[32] My arrival had not been announced. The King was at Amsterdam. Madame de Boubers went off to put my child to bed. For three hours I remained alone. How sad my thoughts were! The feeble candle which the doorkeeper had brought me went out on the chimney without my noticing that it had burned low. For a moment I remained in total darkness and became terrified. The next day the King arrived. He was overjoyed to see his son again but paid little or no attention to me. I received the principal persons of the city, and my pallor was so great, the change in my appearance so extraordinary, that everyone looked at me with pity and sympathy. I continued on to Amsterdam. There public opinion had been aroused against me. I was said to be still young and attractive, interested only in the pleasures of Paris and despising the country over which my children would some day rule. As soon as I appeared, however, this hostility was transformed into a lively and favorable solicitude as to my health. Even the common people exclaimed with an expressive gesture and with evidence of emotion: "Our poor Queen!"

The authorities called on me. I requested the prayers of each of the religious persuasions. Several clergymen in making their addresses showed signs of an emotion which astonished me. Later I asked Abbé Bertrand the reason for this. He replied that when they arrived they had heard very unfavorable reports about me, but my appearance had touched them, they had regretted their unjust opinion and announced publicly that they had been deceived.

The Palace of Amsterdam, formerly the City Hall, was very handsome outside. The King had added many new decorations, but no dwelling could have been more depressing inside. My drawing-room, previously the

criminal court, was decorated with a frieze of skulls in black and white marble. No one had thought of removing this ornamentation, which was much admired. The hallways were gloomy; my rooms looked out toward a church; they smelled bad, and when a window was opened a heavy odor of sulphur rose from the near-by canal. My Dutch ladies in waiting seemed pleasant enough, but they were strangers to me; most of them had been recently appointed. The result was that I spent my mornings alone, reading in my room. I hardly ever saw my son. Word would be sent me when dinner was ready that the King was waiting for me. While we were at the table he would scarcely say a word. After the meal the King would thrum on the piano, which stood open. He would take his son on his knees, kiss him and lead him out on the balcony which overlooked the square. The crowd, catching sight of them, would give a few cheers. The King would reenter the room, return to the piano, recite some French poetry or hum an air. I would stay in an armchair, not saying a word and watching what went on in the room. When a few hours had passed, my husband, becoming conscious of the strained situation, would ring and send for the Dutch members of our household and the ladies in waiting. Card-tables would be brought out. Sometimes I played also and at nine o'clock I returned to my apartments after having said good night, the only word we had spoken to one another. This is an exact picture of how I spent my days at Amsterdam.

Thus I was less unhappy, less actively tormented than I had been, but my strength continued to fail and I had lost all my former energy. This state of loneliness in a foreign country filled me with terror. Death, the thought of which had previously attracted me, now presented itself under terrifying aspects. "What am I doing here?" I asked myself. "Is it possible that I may die here far from my native land, without a loving hand to soothe my

last moments, without being able to address a fond farewell to those I love? Why did they let me go? And why did I myself decide to come?" I only had one aim in life—to escape from this country and regain my freedom.

The only form of amusement I could find was in reading novels of the most horrifying sort. The works of Ann Radcliffe were very useful to me in this respect. It was impossible for me to fix my mind on anything serious. In order to obtain a moment's respite I was obliged to interest myself in these haunting tales and imagine the horrors described there were such as were happening around me. The palace became in my mind the stronghold of the Inquisition. Within its walls no one dared utter a word; everyone was terrified. When the Abbé Bertrand came to see me I quickly dismissed him for fear of getting him in trouble. In short, I felt myself wasting away day by day, and the memory of my former misery together with my present state of loneliness combined to fill me with the gloomiest of thoughts.

I cannot better describe my condition than by copying a letter I wrote Madame de Broc and which I sent her by one of my brother's aides-de-camp.

> Here I am at Amsterdam, my dear Adèle, alone, utterly alone. Who is there who can understand me now that you are so far away? I admit that this loneliness and the meager affection I seem to inspire in those about me are beginning to terrify me. What if I were to die here, deprived of all loving care? In spite of myself this idea comes frequently to my mind. I need only look at myself in the glass to see how little it would take to kill me. When I agreed to carry out my family's wishes my courage was greater than my strength. You who knew everything that awaited me, you alone tried to dissuade me. I did as they asked me. The King wished to have me near him. I wonder why. I came, but what a life I lead! I hardly ever see my son. I know he

is being spoiled. The thought hurts me. I can do nothing to prevent it. God's will be done.

Poor Abbé Bertrand came to see me. He encouraged me by describing how public opinion has changed toward me. In spite of all the slanders that had been spread, people said: "Can this woman, whom we see apparently with only a short time to live, be that person who was described to us as so gay, so devoted to amusements of all kinds, who hated Holland? We have been deceived." See, Adèle, how something good comes of it when we sacrifice ourselves, when we do what we think is best. The palace here is like a chamber of the Inquisition. No one dares speak. Everyone trembles. I quickly dismissed the abbé for fear of getting him into trouble if I kept him with me too long, for I am not allowed to see anyone.

My trouble is no longer one that can be dissipated by the laughter of youth. How far away those days seem. The most terrible thing about a deep sorrow is that it renders you more sensitive to every gloomy thought. Every incident that occurs has its repercussion in a heart that is already wounded. All my surroundings recall to me what I formerly suffered. That same smell of peat comes in through the windows and the calls of the night watchman, which I heard as I watched beside my child's bedside, still ring in my ears. Ah, my dear Adèle, I do not fear death if it will unite us once more. But I feel that I sadden you. Console yourself. At least I am quiet in my mind and in agreeing to come here I resigned myself to what might follow. Now I can at least weep alone. It is a solace for me. You remember that formerly to do so was considered a crime. You too weep, but you are surrounded by the affection of your family. It is love that makes us live and it is that which I miss the most here. You think of me sometimes, do you not, my dear Adèle, in spite of your grief? Think how much I need you. At least I hope that we may be allowed to live together and

by mingling our sorrows make them less bitter. Take care of your health. Health is necessary in order to be brave, and we need so much courage to keep on living.

Yesterday I received all the official authorities. I could not resist asking for the prayers of the different religions. Several persons when they made their addresses appeared deeply moved, and the abbé has explained to me since that they arrived quite hostile to me on account of what they had been told, but that for some reason, I cannot say what, when they saw me they realized the mistake they had made and declared they had been deceived and had done wrong to form an opinion without having met me. Poor people. I forgive them. It was so natural they should be mistaken. Everything had been done to make them misjudge me. But then why insist I return here? It certainly must be for some political reason which I cannot understand. But, farewell. I have relieved my heart and it has done me good. You are the only person to whom I can do so. Calm your own grief in order I may be able to combat mine.

(signed) HORTENSE.

My brother, who worried about my health, sent me one of his aides-de-camp. He took a long time to reach me. No one dared to come near my apartment to announce that he had arrived. I told him to reassure my brother. I was too much touched by Eugène's kindness to increase his anxieties in telling him about my poor health and low spirits.

French troops, under some pretext or other, entered Holland. The King in order to preserve the independence of his country sacrificed considerable territory to the demands of France. In spite of this he found himself constantly at odds with the Emperor, and the tone of their private correspondence was embittered by their political differences. My husband thought that a letter

from me would help persuade the Emperor to withdraw the troops, whose presence might affect the popularity of my children. I did as he wished. But I received no answer.

In the meanwhile the heavy air of Amsterdam increased my weakness. I was only able to breathe by having vinegar constantly burned in the room. My husband's French physician became alarmed to see me so ill. "Madame," he declared, "your condition is serious. If I say so, people will not believe me. I beg you to call in the principal Dutch doctor. It is absolutely necessary for you to have a change of air, and he is the only one who can convince the King."

Like his French colleague the Dutch doctor found me in very poor health. I do not know what he may have told the King, but I heard no more about the matter. I was convinced that if I stayed any longer where I was I should die and, as I have just said, death under such conditions, utterly alone, without anyone to console me, without anyone to comfort me was a terrible thought. But how was I to leave? I could not do so without the King's permission.

My husband went to Haarlem to spend a few days with his son. I remained more alone than ever in this vast place. One night I heard the report of artillery. I called my attendants. They agreed with me that what we heard was the sound of cannon. It was midnight. Why should the guns be fired at such a time of night? Perhaps the English were attempting a surprise attack, perhaps they were going to capture Amsterdam. Is it possible to believe that this idea caused me to feel happy? How wretched one must be when the idea of changing prisons and masters makes one rejoice! May my children, my friends, forgive me for having felt this way. It was the only egotistic thought I ever had; and was it not a natural one considering that I felt myself dying and thought everyone had deserted me? The noise still

THE ROYAL PALACE OF AMSTERDAM
Painted by C. V. Labargé

continued. One of my maids woke up a servant. The latter went to the hall on the second floor in order to get a better idea from where the cannon was firing, and discovered that a window had been left open. This window kept slamming from time to time, and it was this noise echoing through the great corridors which we had thought was the booming of cannon. I smiled at my mistake but blushed at the thought of the joy it had given me. I again began to brood over my sad lot in order to find an excuse for my unhappiness.

I was allowed to have only one interview with the French Ambassador, and that conversation took place in the presence of my ladies in waiting and the officers attached to my official household. I had asked him to tell me if what Monsieur de Broc had reported regarding the King's instructions to Monsieur Van Maanen, his minister, to spread slanderous reports of my conduct was true. The ambassador confirmed the report and even added that Monsieur Van Maanen was prepared to sign a statement to that effect.

Meanwhile my health grew steadily worse. I felt that unless I had the courage to ask permission to go away I should in a short time not have enough strength to go. The terror with which my husband inspired me was still so acute that I hardly dared ask him a question. I finally ventured to do so. I told him that the air of Amsterdam was killing me and reminded him of his promise to allow me to go and take the waters whenever the doctors prescribed them for me. He made many objections, but it was finally decided that I might go to the Château of Loo [33] in Holland, where the air would be better than what I was breathing at the time. The idea of leaving my son behind pained me, but I felt reassured as to his health since I left Madame de Boubers to take care of him.

Loo was for me like Amsterdam. I felt that my only salvation was in those happy hills where my bright youth

had been spent and whose air was what I so dearly desired. I wrote the King that I could no longer put off trying this cure which had in the past proved so beneficial. He did not dare to refuse me, but replied by a long letter [34] in which he spoke of the future of my children in Holland and of our duty to keep this country for them to reign over. I did not at that time understand very much what he was writing about, for I was unaware of the fact that the discussions between the two brothers had reached a point where my husband was afraid that Holland would lose her independence.

I left [33] with two of my Dutch ladies in waiting and two of my equerries, Monsieur de Renesse and Monsieur de Marmol. As I drew nearer France I felt that I was being restored to life. Everything stirred my emotions. The first custom-house officials we encountered made my heart beat faster because they spoke my language. The first hill I caught sight of made tears come to my eyes. Yet I feared I should not be strong enough to reach my goal. I felt so weak. If I had been inclined to have any illusions about my appearance the alarm of those about me, the words uttered involuntarily by the people that came to catch a glimpse of me while our horses were being changed would have made me realize what a condition I was in.

"Ah, how ill she looks! She must be dying."

"If only I can reach Plombières," I said to myself, "I shall be saved." Finally I arrived but only to see my illness become more acute due to an inflammation of the chest and an expectoration of blood. My own doctor and Mademoiselle Cochelet came from Paris. Careful nursing, my youth, a greater peace of mind were what restored me to life. Madame de Broc hastened to me. She was still inconsolable for the loss of her husband, about whom she kept talking to me, and her grief, which I shared so intimately, increased my fever. My doctor insisted that she return to Paris in order not to hamper my convalescence.

It was absolutely necessary that I should rest. Yet constantly something came up that prevented my being quiet. From Paris I received letters giving horrible details regarding the fire that had taken place during a reception given for the Empress Marie Louise by the Prince of Schwarzenberg.[36] My family, my friends had been in danger, and the account of this terrible accident became a real danger in itself for me, so keen was the emotion it aroused in my enfeebled condition.

Immediately afterwards a messenger brought me word that the King had abdicated the throne of Holland,[37] and I had been named Regent in accordance with the constitution. Real anxiety as regards what had happened to the King was my first reaction. No one knew where he had retired.[38] I imagined that he had left for America, alone, with no one to help him, no one to console him. His fate aroused my sympathy. I almost came to believe that I had become fond of him, now that he had known misfortune. I wrote the Emperor, seeking to calm his resentment against my husband and asking him to help the latter even though he might be angry with him. I received several messages to the effect that he intended to annex Holland and telling me what I should reply to the various legislative bodies whose delegate the Baron von Spaen came to inform me of my appointment as Regent.

The Emperor's letters contained severe reproaches in regard to my husband's conduct. Frequently a single word summed up an incident, and his irritation showed itself in the violence of his expressions. For instance he said, "The King went away leaving his son utterly destitute." I should have understood that the phrase was dictated by his irritation, but it touched me at my most sensitive point. The tense state of my nerves, the strain resulting from the continual arrival of messengers combined to inspire me with the most gloomy thoughts. I was haunted by the idea that my son was alone, without anyone to care for him. I forgot the throne which he still occupied and thought only of his complete isolation and

my inability to help him. The moment I received news of what was happening I sent Monsieur de Marmol to bring the child to me. But the Emperor had acted first. One of his aides-de-camp, Monsieur de Lauriston, brought the boy to Saint Cloud after he had reigned for a week, having already received the oaths of allegiance from the various branches of the government before the union of Holland and France was announced.[39]

I heard that my husband had left the Palace of Haarlem with the utmost secrecy [40] accompanied by the general commanding the royal guard. The general was a Frenchman, formerly an officer in my husband's old regiment of dragoons. He owed his promotion to my husband and was prepared to sacrifice his future on his behalf. The King had become aware that it was the Emperor's first intention to unite Holland to France. The French armies dominated the country. It was impossible to think of opposing them. He therefore decided to withdraw. I cannot blame him for such a decision. On the contrary it is always a noble act to give up a throne on conscientious grounds. Only I, who had never taken part in public affairs, could not help resenting the fact that I should have been forced to return to Holland in order to further his political schemes. I received word that he had arrived at the resort of Töplitz. The only thing that prevented me from obeying my first impulse and hastening to him was the feeling that I was unable to help him in any way and the fear that my presence would recall the memories of a past when he had been unhappy. Had I thought it was in my power to console him, I should not have hesitated. I should have put aside even the sacred interests of my children. But being convinced that my efforts would be useless, I felt that to go to my husband would be merely to appear to act generously toward him in the eyes of the world, and in reality not better in any way the condition of the man for whom I was making this sacrifice.[41]

NOTES TO VOLUME I

CHAPTER I

1. François de Beauharnais belonged to an old established family in the province of the Orléanais. Born February 9, 1714, at La Rochelle, he, like his father, entered the navy. He was *chef d'escadre* in November, 1756, when, by letters patent, he was appointed "Governor and Lieutenant-General of the islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe, Marie Galante, Saint-Martin, Saint Bartholomew, La Désirade, Dominica, Sainte-Lucie, Grenada, Les Grenadins, Tobago, Saint-Vincent Cayenne and its dependencies and the Leeward Isles." He was made Marquis de la Ferté-Beauharnais by letters patent in July, 1764. In 1751 he had married his cousin Marie Anne Henriette de Pyvart de Chastullé, born in Blois, March 17, 1722, died in Paris, 1767. The Marquis de Beauharnais died at Saint-Germain-en-Laye on June 18, 1800. See L. de Brotonne, *Les Bonaparte et leurs alliances,* Paris, Champion, 2nd edition, 1901, in-octavo, page 70.

2. The Marquis de Beauharnais really had three sons, but the eldest was born and died the same year, 1753.

3. May 28, 1760: Queen Hortense left this date blank. Alexandre François Marie de Beauharnais, born at Fort-Royal (Martinique), was privately christened on June 10, 1767, by Frère Ambroise, curé of the parish of Saint-Louis in Fort-Royal. Official baptism was held in the church of Saint-Sulpice in Paris, January 15, 1770. He was musketeer in the 1st company, March 10, 1774; second lieutenant in the Regiment of the Sarre-Infantry, December 8, 1776; commissioned captain, June 3, 1779; captain in the Royal-Champagne Cavalerie, June 2, 1784; *major en second* to the 51st regiment of infantry May 1st, 1788; *adjutant-général lieutenant-colonel,* August 25th, 1791; *adjutant-général colonel,* May 23, 1792; *maréchal de camp,* September 7, 1792; *lieutenant-général,* March 8, 1793; general-in-chief provisionally, May 23, 1793, definitely May 30, 1793. He was appointed minister of war June 13, 1793, but declined. He resigned in August, 1793. Guillotined July 23, 1794. *(Archives administratives de la Guerre, Dossier Beauharnais.)*

4. What actually took place was that after the departure of his father (April, 1761) Alexandre remained several years in Martinique,

being taken care of by Madame Tascher de la Pagerie. He returned to France toward the end of 1769.

5. The date of Josephine's birth has been the subject of numerous controversies. The *Almanach impérial* is partly to blame for this, for it gives the date as June 24, 1768, which would have made her eleven years old at the time of her first marriage. This date is repeated on her death certificate, drawn up at Rueil.

Queen Hortense agrees with the official version, which declares that Josephine was the youngest of the three sisters. A little further on, however, she contradicts herself by saying that when Josephine married she was fifteen. This places the date of her birth in 1764. The truth is that Joseph Gaspard Tascher and Rose-Claire des Vergers de Sanois, his wife, had three daughters: 1st, Marie Joseph Rose, known as Josephine, born at Trois-Ilets, June 23, 1763; 2nd, Catherine-Désirée, born at Trois-Ilets, December 11, 1764, died at Trois-Ilets, October 16, 1777. It was to the death of this sister that the family tradition refers which the Queen repeats in this paragraph (the letter asking for her hand is dated October 23, 1777; it was published by F. Masson, *Joséphine de Beauharnais,* page 103); 3rd, Marie-Françoise, born at Trois-Ilets September 3, 1766, died there November 5, 1791.

6. Queen Hortense left this blank. The marriage took place at Noisy-le-Grand, where the estate of Madame Renaudin was situated, on December 13, 1779.

7. Eugène-Rose de Beauharnais, who became Prince Eugène, was born in Paris, September 3, 1781, at the residence of the Marquis de Beauharnais, his grandfather, situated in rue Thévenot. This street has now been destroyed. The portion where the *hôtel* Beauharnais was situated faced rue Dussoubs (which ended there) and was demolished to make room for the rue Réaumur. Eugène was baptized September 4, 1781.

8. Queen Hortense was born on April 10, 1783, in rue Neuve Saint-Charles, where the Marquis de Beauharnais, her grandfather, was then living. This street was a short branch of the rue Pépinière, which at the time continued beyond the Place Saint-Augustin to the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. The site of this house is now occupied by the rue de la Boëtie. She was baptized the next day at the Madeleine de la Ville l'Evêque (Saint-Philippe du Roule was built, but not yet consecrated) and received the Christian names of Hortense Eugénie. Her godmother was her cousin Fanny de Beauharnais and her godfather her grandfather Tascher de la Pagérie.

9. Rose-Claire des Vergers de Sanois, Hortense's maternal grandmother, was born August 27, 1736. She died at Trois-Ilets on July 2, 1807. Josephine's father died November 6, 1790.

10. The date of this departure is June, 1788. Hortense was a little more than five years old.

11. Marion, a mulatto to whom Napoleon gave an income of 1200 francs on September 20, 1807.

12. François, Comte de Beauharnais, elder brother of Alexandre and Hortense's uncle, was born at La Rochelle August 12, 1756. He was *surnuméraire aux mousquetaires gris,* then second lieutenant in the regiment of Belzunce-Dragon, August 12, 1772. He received the rank of captain, February 28, 1778, colonel in 1785. He was *député suppléant de la noblesse de Paris* at the États Généraux. He took his seat November 3, 1789, on account of the resignation of Lally-Tolendal. While *aide-major-general* in the army of the Prince of Condé, his resignation was accepted when his brother assumed command of the Republican forces. Under the Empire he was ambassador to Etruria and Spain and also senator. He died in Paris at 110, rue de la Pépinière, March 3, 1846 *(Archives administratives de la Guerre).*

13. Now Lycée Saint-Louis. The understanding between Beauharnais and his wife was that the latter should take care of Eugène till the age of five. It was shortly after he had reached this age that Beauharnais placed his son in boarding-school.

14. The majority of the biographers of Queen Hortense do not mention this stay at the Abbaye aux Bois. As a matter of fact it was a rather short one. Josephine seems to have returned to Paris from Fontainebleau in October, 1791. The Abbaye aux Bois, as well as the other convents for women, was shut by the law of August 18, 1792.

15. Hortense is mistaken; no such decree had been passed at the time. General Beauharnais' resignation was accepted August 21, 1793. He had been in command of the Army of the Rhine since May.

16. The warrant issued by the *Comité de Sureté Générale* for the arrest of Beauharnais is dated March 2, 1794. The arrest took place at Ferté-Beauharnais and was carried out by Citizen Sirejean, Commissaire of the Comité who brought back his prisoner to Paris. Beauharnais was first placed in the prison of the Luxembourg and then transferred to that of the Carmes, March 14, 1794.

17. Josephine had rented in September, 1793, a country house, where Madame Hosten was living at Croissy near Chatou between Paris and Saint-Germain-en-Laye. She was denounced by an anonymous letter in which the authorities were warned to be on their guard against the "former Vicomtesse de Beauharnais who has many connections in government circles." (*Archives nationales F7 4740.*) A warrant, issued by the *Comité de Sureté Générale,* dated April 19, 1794, ordered the arrest of "the *citoyenne* Beauharnais, wife of the former general, rue Saint-Dominique, No. 953, a woman called Hosten, same house, and a

man called Croiseuil, their confederate, living at Croissy near Chatou. They are to be taken to prison after their papers have been examined." *(Archives nationales, Registres des mandats d'arrêt du Comité de Sureté Générale,* A.F. II, 294, folio 227.) The search of Joséphine's house took place on April 20, 1794. The order of imprisonment of "the *citoyenne* Beauharnais suspect under the law of September 17 last year" was signed at the *Comité Révolutionnaire de la section des Tuileries,* April 21, 1794. She was confined in the prison of the Carmes where her husband was already imprisoned.

18. See in C. d'Arjuzon's *Hortense Beauharnais,* page 62, the petition addressed to the Convention on 27 Floreal, Year II, by Eugène Beauharnais "aged twelve" and Hortense Beauharnais "aged eleven" (sic).

19. It does not seem that this order was actually given, at least not by the Convention. Perhaps it may have been enforced by some local *comité de section.* In any case it was quite in harmony with the theories of Beauharnais, an ardent disciple of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

20. Although previous authorities have not been able to determine the exact location of the house where Josephine lived for three years in the rue Saint-Dominique, the present editor of the Memoirs of Queen Hortense feels justified in locating it on the site of what is now No. 226 Boulevard Saint-Germain.

21. The guillotine was operated on the Place de la Révolution, formerly Place Louis XV, now Place de la Concorde, until 21 Prairial, Year II. At that time on account of the protest of the shopkeepers in the rue Saint-Honoré it was decided to transfer it to the Place Saint-Antoine opposite the ruins of the Bastille, but four days later this decision was revoked.

22. This banker, a partner of Monsieur Vanhée, was called not Henry as in the Queen's manuscript but Jean Marie Joseph Emmery.

23. Queen Hortense is certainly mistaken in speaking of the rue de Sèvres. The Convent of the Carmelites and its gardens occupied part of the large plot of ground bounded by the rue Vaugirard, rue Cassette, rue du Vieux-Colombier, rue du Cherche-Midi and rue du Regard. An examination of the plan of Paris by Verniquet and the reconstitution of the sites made by A. Sorel, *Le Couvent des Carmes et le Séminaire Saint-Sulpice souls la Terreur,* Paris, Didier, 1863, p. 243, indicates that the garden to which Hortense and Eugène were taken was that of the Filles du Saint-Sacrament which had an entrance on the rue Cassette.

24. He perished on 7 Thermidor (Note of the Queen Hortense). As a matter of fact he was guillotined 5 Thermidor, Year II (July 23, 1794). He and forty-eight of his fellow prisoners had been impli-

cated in the so-called conspiracy of the prisons. Forty-five of the accused were condemned to death and executed on the Place de la Nation, then known as the Place du Trône renversé, to which the guillotine had been transferred on 25 Prairial, as the people living in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine did not want it in their district.

25. The original of this letter dated 4 Thermidor, Year II, is preserved in the archives of His Imperial Highness Prince Napoleon.

26. As a matter of fact Josephine never appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal, consequently she was never tried and cannot have been called among those to be guillotined.

CHAPTER II

1. Josephine was one of the first prisoners to be released 19 Thermidor, Year II (August 6, 1794).

2. Josephine had been appointed guardian of the children of Beauharnais, with Etienne Jacques Jerome Calmelet as deputy guardian, by the justice of the peace of the section Fontaine-Grenelle on 27 Germinal, Year III (April 16, 1795). The Bureau du Domaine National under date of 2 Fructidor, Year III (19 August, 1795) turned over to the children their father's estate. *(Archives de la Seine, Fonds des Domaines, carton 635, dossier 2997.)*

3. According to Monsieur Frédéric Masson this dinner took place January 21, 1796. It was the anniversary of the execution of Louis XVI.

4. This order is dated 22 Vendémiaire, Year IV (October 14, 1795).

5. Emilie Louise de Beauharnais, born in Paris January 28, 1781, was the daughter of François de Beauharnais, Hortense's uncle, and his first wife, Françoise Marie. Emilie married the Comte Lavallette on May 18, 1798, and died in Paris June 18, 1855. Her heroic conduct in taking her husband's place in prison during the Restoration and allowing him to escape is well known.

6. This letter is reproduced in the correspondence of the Emperor and Hortense, in the Appendix.

7. The son of Queen Hortense still has a little round watch which was sent his mother by General B. at the period (note written by Napoleon III on the Red Manuscript of the Memoirs).

8. Bonaparte arrived in Paris on December 5, 1797, at 5 P.M.

9. Monsieur de Talleyrand!!

10. The famous reception took place on January 3, 1798, at the Hôtel de Galliffet, rue du Bac, which was then the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Josephine appeared in a very bad humor.

11. Madame de Staël had met Bonaparte for the first time during the visit he paid Talleyrand the day after his return to Paris, December 6, 1797. He paid little attention to her. She again saw him at this ball given in his honor. It was there that in reply to her question, "Who is the finest woman in the world now or in the past?" Bonaparte replied with a smile, "The one who has had the most children."

12. Caroline Bonaparte, born at Ajaccio, March 25, 1782, was a year and fifteen days older than Hortense.

13. Napoleon at Saint Helena confirmed the mutual affection of Louis and Emilie. Speaking to Gourgaud of Madame Lavallette he said that "he had prevented her marrying Louis Bonaparte because she was the daughter of royalist emigrants." (Gourgaud, *Sainte Helene,* Paris, Flammarion, no date, volume I, page 489.) We shall see later that in 1816 Louis still remembered his affection for Emilie.

14. Regarding this project of marriage see *Mémoires de Barras* edited by Georges Duruy, Paris, Hachette, 1896, volume III, page 141. In reply to the suggestions of Barras, who was in favor of the match, Reubell is supposed to have replied, "We are good Alsacians. We are not strong enough to compete with the daughter of Madame de Beauharnais and a Corsican stepfather." But then Barras lies frequently.

15. The deed of sale of Malmaison from Lecouteulx du Moley is dated 2 Floréal, Year VII (April 21, 1799). The Queen refers to the estate throughout as La Malmaison, but it was generally known during the Empire as Malmaison, and this is its proper title, according to the erudite curator Monsieur Jean Bouguignon.

16. The news of Bonaparte's landing at Fréjus reached Paris, October 13, 1799. Josephine heard of it by a note from Eugène and at once left to meet her husband, accompanied by Hortense. She took the route through Sens, Joigny, Auxerre and Châlon. But Bonaparte had, after leaving Lyons, gone north through Moulins, Nevers and Cosne. Josephine did not know this till she reached Lyons. She at once returned to Paris, but did not reach there till October 19. Bonaparte had already been there three days. The reader will note that Hortense does not refer to the reconciliation which took place between Josephine and Bonaparte, which she and her brother brought about.

CHAPTER III

1. The marriage of Elisa and Felix Pascal Bacciochi took place in 1797. The civil service was performed on May 1, at Marseilles, the religious one at Bovisio-Mombello, June 14.

2. The marriage of Pauline and Victor-Emmanuel Leclerc had been celebrated at Montebello in September, 1797.

3. The marriage contract of Caroline Bonaparte and General Murat was signed at the Palace of the Luxembourg in the presence of Napoleon on 28 Nivôse, Year VIII (January 18, 1800).

4. The civil marriage was performed on 30 Nivôse, Year VIII, in the *temple décadaire* (presumably disaffected church) of the canton de Plailly to which Mortefontaine was attached.

5. 30 Pluviô, Year VIII (February 19, 1800).

6. All the new occupants felt this same depression. Rœderer tells how one day, shortly after having moved in, he said to Bonaparte, "This is a gloomy spot, General." "Yes," replied Napoleon, "gloomy like everything that is grand."

7. The Queen is certainly mistaken. The possessor of the title of Duc d'Arenberg at this time was already married, and his sons were too young to think of marrying. Perhaps she is referring to his nephew Ernest Engilbert Louis Marie François, Prince of Arenberg.

8. The apartment occupied by Josephine was on the ground floor of the palace, facing the garden, between the Pavillon de l'Horloge and the Pavillon de Flore.

9. Eugène had been appointed captain in the *Chasseurs à cheval de la Garde,* December 22, 1799.

10. Gros, who had just returned from a trip to Italy where he had gone to select the paintings France was entitled to receive under the conditions of the peace treaty, showed "The Plague Victims of Jaffa" at the Salon of 1804. The painting is now in the Louvre.

11. Hortense's memory deceives her. The program of the Théâtre de la République (Opéra) on 18 Vendémaire, Year IX (October 10, 1800), was not *Dansomanie* but the first performance of *Les Horaces,* a lyric tragedy in three acts by Guillard, music by Porta, and the ballet of *Pygmalion.*

12. 3 Nivôse, Year IX (December 24, 1800).

13. Josephine had on that day a shawl that she had never worn before and that was the reason for her being late. See *Mémoires du General Rapp,* Paris, Garnier, no date, in-octavo, page 21.

14. Her child was born less than a month afterwards, January 21, 1801.

15. According to the *Journal de Paris,* which published a list of casualties, there were 32 victims, of whom 7 were killed, 20 seriously wounded and 5 slightly injured.

16. On February 23, 1803, La Fayette, as he was leaving the Ministry of the Navy in Paris, slipped on the ice and broke the neck of the femur. Ten months before, he had written Bonaparte his letter of May 20, 1802, which, although it praised the latter's conduct on 18 Brumaire and his establishment as dictator, marked the end of relations between

the two generals. See Etienne Charavay, *Le Général La Fayette,* Paris, Société de l'Histoire de la Révolution, 1898, octavo, page 388.

17. The first edition of *Atala ou les Amours de deux sauvages dans le désert,* Paris, Migneret xxiv + 210 pages, is dated Year IX-1801. It appeared in the spring of 1801.

18. Eugène had been made *chef d'escadron* of the *Chasseurs à cheval de la Garde* on July 18, 1800.

19. Louis had been appointed *chef de brigade* of the 5th Dragoons on January 11, 1800.

20. Bessières referred to the financial speculations of Bourrienne, which everyone knew of and which caused his dismissal by the First Consul.

21. Hortense's room, close to the Pavillon de Flore, was next to Josephine's dressing-room, from which, by passing through a reading-room and a bathroom, one reached the bedroom of the First Consul and Madame Bonaparte.

22. Colonel Lauriston had been sent to London with the ratification of the preliminaries of the peace treaty which had been signed 9 Vendémiaire, Year X (October 1, 1801). The crowd unhitched his horses and dragged along his carriage with cries of *"Vive Bonaparte."*

CHAPTER IV

1. "I have just read the memoirs of Bourrienne. He describes his attitude toward the Consul, toward my mother and myself quite inaccurately. It is true that at the time of my marriage he was selected to speak to me about it. This was the only occasion on which he had anything to do with our family affairs, and he says nothing about the conditions under which it occurred. He was merely secretary to General Bonaparte, who was surrounded by generals and aides-de-camp. Bourrienne was never with him on important occasions and certainly not on 18 Brumaire. He never commented on the General's decisions. The latter would never have allowed him to do so. At Paris he never dined with us, and he only did so occasionally at the Malmaison, as Madame Bourrienne and his children had settled nearby at Rueil. As soon as his work was over he would leave and join them there. The Consul invited Madame Bourrienne two or three times to dinner at the Malmaison. This indicates that Bourrienne's position was an inferior one. He took orders and did not receive confidences. It is impossible for any impartial person to conceive the quantity of lies he has put into his memoirs. Even in regard to quite trivial things his memory is at fault, and his perfidiousness is concealed by a jovial manner. Why

should he have lied about me when he meant to say nice things about me? Probably because he remembered the remarks that were made about him or because, being anxious to appear to have been an intimate of ours, he wished to make people forget that he was considered rather ridiculous. I have told the whole truth about him. The Consul dismissed him on account of his speculations and replaced him by Monsieur de Méneval, who was as simple and honest as his predecessor had been pretentious and intriguing. Bourrienne tried to make himself appear indispensable to the Consul on account of his skill in drawing up reports. All one has to do to judge what a commonplace person he really was is to read his memoirs. He like so many others was nothing but an instrument which Napoleon made use of."

(Note by Queen Hortense.) This was written after the rest of the first part of the Queen's Memoirs and is copied in the margin of the Red Manuscript. The *Mémoires de Monsieur de Bourrienne, ministre d'État sur Napoléon, le Directoire, le Consulat, l'Empire et la Restauration* appeared 1829, Paris, *chez* Ladvocat, 10 volumes, in octavo. When Hortense wrote the above protest it was not yet known that the *Mémoires* had been compiled by the Marquis de Villemarest, who had access only to three volumes of notes by Bourrienne and had added all the rest himself.

2. This name is presumably a fictitious one. We might mention that in the volume *Poésies du Comte de Saint-Leu* [Louis Bonaparte's title after 1815. Translator's note], published in Florence by Piatti, 1831, 2 vols. in octavo, we find Volume II, page 273, a poem addressed to Sophie C., but this is almost certainly not the same person.

3. Until his marriage Louis had lived in the palace of the Tuileries on the Cour de l'Orangerie.

4. The banns were published 21 Frimaire, Year X (December 12, 1801) and the contract signed at the Tuileries on 13 Nivôse (January 3, 1802). It was the day after, and not the same day as Hortense and Louis both say in their *Mémoires* that the marriage took place at the Tuileries at 9 P.M. before Huguet de Montaran, mayor of the *first arrondissement.*

5. Besides the persons mentioned the following also signed the *acte de mariage:* Lucien Bonaparte, Joachim Murat, Joseph Fesch, Jean Marie Portalis. On the other hand Lavallette's name does not appear.

6. The wedding party arrived at about eleven at the rue de la Victoire, where Cardinal Caprara had been waiting for them since nine o'clock. The altar had been erected in the large drawing-room on the ground floor.

7. The First Consul referred to and paraphrased the line in Voltaire's tragedy *Œdipe* (act II, scene IV), "J'ai fait des souverains,

et n'ai point voulu l'être." On May 29, 1801, during a performance of this play at the Théâtre-Français, in the presence of the King of Etruria, this line was received with cheers by the spectators.

8. These cards were drawn up as follows: "Madame Bonaparte *la mère* has the honor to inform you of the marriage of her son, Louis Bonaparte, *chef de bataillon,* with Mademoiselle Hortense Beauharnais. Paris 13 Nivôse, Year X." (Archives of Prince Napoleon.)

9. April 18, 1802.

10. The origin of Louis' ill-health, according to Doctor Cabanès, who has studied the question closely, was a form of rheumatism, which first appeared following several falls from his horse in 1796. Doctor Cabanès considers there are no grounds for attributing the King of Holland's illness to a syphilitic infection as some writers have done.

11. This ball took place on August 15, 1802. The *Journal de Paris* refers to it as follows (29 Thermidor, Year X): "For the birthday of the First Consul a theatrical performance was given at Malmaison on August 15. The play, written by Citizen Duval, was very clever. Madame Louis Bonaparte, in spite of being seven months with child, acted in it. Afterwards she danced several square-dances."

The same number contained a poem *Impromptu fait le 27 thermidor en voyant danser Madame Louis Bonaparte, enceinte de 7 mois,* signed "L."

12. The First Consul had bought for Hortense and Louis a house which had been built for Mademoiselle Dervieux, former mistress of the Comte d'Artois. At that time it belonged to Mademoiselle Lange, the actress, who had married and was then Madame Simon. Its site is now occupied by the Synagogue in the rue de la Victoire.

13. August 2, 1802.

14. Jean-Louis Baudelocque.

15. The Queen first wrote, "I shall drown myself."

16. An allusion to the libelous English pamphlets, regarding the relations between the Consul and Hortense before the latter's marriage. The utter falsity of these charges has been proved. Additional proof is contained in the tone of Napoleon's letters published in the present volumes. In connection with this, Napoleon said at Saint Helena, "Louis knew what these stories amounted to, but his self-conceit and his curious character were nevertheless shocked by them, and he frequently brought them up as excuses for his conduct." (*Mémorial,* Garnier's edition, volume II, page 332.)

17. Here Hortense makes a mistake. The trip to Normandy did not take place till after the birth of her son. The First Consul and Madame Bonaparte left Paris October 29, 1802, and returned on November 14.

18. The birth certificate of Napoleon Charles was made out on 23 Vendémiaire (October 15) by Monsieur Isidore-Brière-Mondétour, mayor of the second *arrondissement.*

19. This visit of the First Consul and Josephine on Louis took place April 7, 1804.

20. Article 4 of Section II of the *senatus-consulte* of 28 Floreal, Year XII (May 18, 1804) gave Napoleon the right to adopt the children and grandchildren of his brothers after they had reached the age of eighteen. Article 10 stated, "a *senatus-consulte* establishes the manner in which French princes are to be educated."

21. An account of his accident appeared in the *Gazette de France,* 21 Floreal, Year XI (May 11, 1803). It had taken place three days earlier. In the carriage were Josephine, Hortense, Caroline and Cambacérès.

22. The Queen appears to be mistaken in her dates. The two Taschers were already in Paris in October, 1802, for we have a record that one of them enlisted during that month. The absence of Josephine here referred to would seem not to be the trip to Belgium, as Hortense says, but the one to Normandy just after the birth of Hortense's son. The two Taschers were first cousins of Josephine.

23. The end of this sentence is added on the green manuscript but was not recopied on the red manuscript.

24. 22 Ventôse, Year XI (Sunday, March 13, 1803).

25. Decree of 2 Prairial, Year XI (May 22, 1803). It applied to Englishmen belonging to the militia and over 18 years of age. The embargo placed by the British government on French vessels dated from May 16, 1803.

26. Phrase added on the green manuscript and not copied on red manuscript.

27. The "hostages" were to be sent to Fontainebleau, Valenciennes, or Orleans.

28. The *Gazette de France* announces his return to Paris September 10, 1803.

29. Hortense went to Compiègne on December 1, 1803. She and her husband lived at 9, rue des Domeliers.

30. The marriage took place 18 Brumaire, Year IX. Decaen mentions some talk of a marriage between Hortense and Moreau which the First Consul was said to have considered. Thibaudeau speaks of a similar project for uniting Moreau and Caroline.

31. At the time when Notre Dame was reconsecrated as a sacred edifice, Madame Hulot and her daughter had taken the places which were being reserved for Josephine. See Chaptal, *Mes souvenirs sur Napoléon,* Paris, Plon, 1893, octavo, page 264.

32. This scene occurred, not as Hortense thinks at the time of the distribution of the swords of honor, but when the Legion of Honor was created.

33. March 20, 1804. The Duc d'Enghien arrived in Paris between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. He was imprisoned at Vincennes at half-past five.

34. In his will, dated April 15, 1821, the Emperor says: "I had the Duc d'Enghien arrested and tried because this was necessary to the safety, the interest and the honor of the French nation. . . . In the same circumstances I should again act in the same way." See Gourgaud, *Saint-Hélène,* Paris, Flammarion, vol. I, page 189, and Las Cases, *Mémorial,* loc. cit., vol. II, page 375.

35. Jerome had married Elizabeth Paterson in Baltimore on December 24, 1803. The marriage was annulled by the imperial decree of March 2, 1805, and by *acte de l'Officialite de Paris,* October 6, 1806.

36. This paragraph is found only on the green manuscript.

CHAPTER V.

1. This remark was made at a family dinner at Saint Cloud, May 18, 1804.

2. Hortense had very long finger-nails. "She had pretty feet, very white hands and rosy and well-curved nails, whose charm won for her the attentions of Chevalier de Livry" (*Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès,* edition Garnier, vol. II, page 415.) Alvimare, who gave Hortense lessons on the harp, was obliged to insist several times that she reduce the length of her nails before she began to play.

3. Auguste Charles Joseph de Flahaut de la Billarderie, born in Paris, rue de Grammont, April 21, 1785, son of Charles François de Flahaut de la Billardérie, although public opinion declared his real father to be Monsieur de Talleyrand. After entering the navy as *ingénieur hydrograph surnuméraire au dépot général de la Marine,* he enlisted in the army in 1800 as cavalry officer. He served in a number of different regiments and his promotion was steady although not particularly rapid for the period. He acted as aide-de-camp to Murat in 1803, was made *général de brigade* in December, 1812, became aide-de-camp to the Emperor on January 26, 1813. In 1813 he received the rank of *général de division.* Placed on the retired list on September 1, 1814, he again resumed his post as aide-de-camp after the return from Elba. He was made a peer on June 2, 1815, and commanded the 9th cavalry division on July 1, 1815. He received leave of absence on July 28, 1815, resigned May 28, 1817, but was recalled to the colors

on November 14, 1830. Louis-Philippe gave him a peerage on November 19, 1831, and appointed him ambassador to Vienna on September 9, 1841. Napoleon III made him senator on December 31, 1852, Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honor on January 27, 1864. He died at Paris, September 1, 1870.

4. See the Earl of Kerry, *The First Napoleon, Some Unpublished Documents from the Bowood Papers,* London, Constable, 1925, octavo, page 218.

5. Monsieur de Flahaut, as is well known, was for a long time in love with Comtesse Anna Potocka, born Tyszkiewicz in 1776, died in Paris, August 16, 1867. But he did not meet her till 1806 at Warsaw, and the Countess did not come to Paris till 1810. The Queen here is probably referring to another lady whom Madame Potocka speaks of as follows in her *Mémoires,* "I had heard Monsieur de F—— spoken of as a very charming man with whom one of the most distinguished of my compatriots had been deeply in love." (*Mémoires de la comtesse Potocka,* edited by Casimir Stryienski, Paris, Plon, 1896, in octavo, page 100.)

6. July 18, 1804, Departure for Boulogne, northern France, Belgium, the left bank of the Rhine. Return to Saint Cloud, October 12, 1804.

7. The Queen left this date blank. The tomb was opened on three different occasions. First in 1000 by Otto III who left it undisturbed, then in 1165 by Frederick Barbarossa, who carried off the sword, the diadem and the marble chair in which the body was seated, and finally in 1215 by Frederick II, who gathered up the remains of the Emperor and placed them in a golden reliquary. The alleged opening of the tomb by Napoleon is purely fictitious. The talisman mentioned belonged till quite lately to Empress Eugénie, who, after the war of 1914, presented it to the cathedral of Rheims.

8. Louis had left Turin September 1, 1804, and traveling under the name of General de Saint-Laurent reached Paris September 8, 1804.

9. Louis had bought this house June 2, 1804. The building was destroyed in 1899, and the site is now occupied by the rue Pillet-Will. The gardens extended as far as the buildings in the rue Taitbout, now numbered 34, 36 and 38.

10. Napoleon Louis, later Crown Prince of Holland and Grand-Duc de Berg and de Clèves, was born rue Cerutti on Thursday, October 11, 1804, at 2:30 P.M. He had the title of Grand-Duc de Berg and de Clèves from March 3, 1809, to December 1, 1813. He married Charlotte Napoleon, daughter of King Joseph, at Florence on July 23, 1826, and died at Forli March 17, 1831.

11. The birth certificate was drawn up by Brière Mondétour, mayor

of the second *arrondissement,* in the mansion in the rue Cerutti, 2 Brumaire, Year XIII, at noon in the presence of the Emperor and Empress.

12. November 25, 1804.

13. In connection with the Pope's visit the construction of the gallery connecting the museum and the Pavillon de Flore had been completed.

14. Day of the Coronation.

15. December 5, 1804. This ceremony was originally intended to take place the day following the coronation, but was postponed on account of the Empress's fatigue.

16. This ceremony took place on March 24, 1805, at 4 P.M. in the gallery of the palace of Saint Cloud, which had been converted into a chapel. The Emperor was godfather and his mother, Madame Mère, godmother.

17. This incident took place in January, 1805. The Emperor had first proposed the Italian crown to Joseph, who had finally declined.

18. Louise Catherine Eleonore Denuelle de la Plaigne, born September 13, 1787, had married at Saint-Germain on January 15, 1805, Jean Honoré François Revel, who claimed to be captain in the 15th Dragoons. This person was arrested two months later for forgery. Caroline and Madame Campan had his wife go to a boarding-school at Chantilly, and her divorce was granted April 29, 1806. She remarried, February 4, 1808, Pierre-Philippe Augier, lieutenant, who died in Poland in December, 1812, captain of the 7th Cuirassiers. She married a third time, March 25, 1814, Charles Auguste Emile de Luxbourg, major in the service of the King of Bavaria, and died in Paris, January 30, 1868.

19. Charles, called Comte Léon, was born December 13, 1806, at Paris in the house the Emperor had given his mother, No. 29, rue de la Victoire. He had been declared as the son of *demoiselle* Eleonore Denuelle, having a private income and a father who was away. He married on June 2, 1868, Françoise Fanny Jouet, by whom he had three sons and a daughter, and died at Pontoise, April 14, 1881. See Max Billard, *Un fils de Napoleon I^er^ d'après des documents inédits,* Paris, Berger et Chausse, 1909, octavo.

20. Napoleon always behaved very generously toward this child. In 1814 he turned over to him an income of 12,000 livres, in 1815 ten shares in *Canaux* (Waterways) worth 100,000 francs. In his will he bequeathed 320,000 francs to him and instructed his executors as follows (paragraph 37 of the will): "I should be pleased to have little Léon become a magistrate if this is in accordance with his tastes." The reader will find Léon again in the Memoirs of the Queen, when he was brought to see the Emperor during the latter's last stay at Malmaison.

21. May 26, 1805.

22. The Emperor insisted that it was easy to guess a woman's character by the way she walked. (Note by Queen Hortense.)

23. Eliza Monroe was the second daughter of James Monroe, President of the United States March 4, 1817, to March 4, 1825. Previously he had been minister to France from 1794 to 1796. He was later entrusted with different diplomatic missions to Paris, London and Madrid and remained in Europe from 1803 till 1808. Eliza Monroe later became Mrs. Hay. She was among the persons mentioned in the Queen's will.

24. The Queen frequently copied portraits of herself. One of these copies is at Malmaison.

25. Imperial decree of June 7, 1805.

26. Napoleon had returned to Fontainebleau, July 11, 1805. He left again for Boulogne, August 2.

27. This ceremony, like that at the Invalides (July 15, 1804), had taken place the year before on August 16 near Terlincthun.

28. This reception took place August 20, 1805.

29. The order was given August 21 at 3:30 A.M. At 8 the troops were all aboard the boats. The Emperor then reviewed the fleet and returned at about 2 to Pont-de-Briques.

30. Hortense returned to Saint-Amand August 25, 1805. This was her husband's fête-day.

31. Napeoleon returned to Saint Cloud September 3, 1805.

32. Louis had been appointed Governor of Paris September 17, 1805.

33. Monsieur de Flahaut was mentioned in the tenth issue of *Bulletin de la Grande Armée* (October 22, 1805) for his behavior in the combats which preceded the taking of Ulm. He was wounded November 1, 1805, at the combat of Lambach.

34. A dispatch from Berthier, dated Schönbrunn, December 21, 1805, had conveyed to Louis orders to remain in Holland and to settle his army into winter quarters there. The Prince left Nimiguen January 8, 1806, for Amsterdam, remained there two days, went back to the Hague and embarked on the 13th for Rotterdam, whence he left directly for Paris.

35. The marriage took place at Munich, January 14, 1806. Auguste-Amélie-Louise was born June 21, 1788.

36. Article one of the contract which was signed January 4, 1806, stipulates: "His Majesty the Emperor of the French and King of Italy will consider his Imperial Highness Prince Eugène as a son of France" (in other words as a member of his family). This title was confirmed by a message notifying the Senate of the adoption of Eugène, January 12, 1806.

37. This refers to General Rapp.

38. Schuermans only mentions one stay of Napoleon at the house of Bessières. He arrived at Grignon on March 12, 1806, and was back at Saint Cloud at 4 P.M. the following day.

39. A report on Hortense dated 1 Germinal, Year VI, mentions this accident, which obliged the little girl to stay for four days in the infirmary for an accidental injury to the thumb of her left hand.

40. As a matter of fact when the Queen was in exile the Crown Prince of Bavaria, contrary to the attitude adopted by his father and young brother, displayed marked hostility toward her.

CHAPTER VI

1. Marie Antoinette Thérèse, daughter of Ferdinand IV, King of Naples and Sicily, was born December 14, 1784. She married on August 21, 1802, Fernando Maria Francisco de Paule, Prince of the Asturias, heir to the throne of Spain, and died May 21, 1806.

2. The reception given at the Tuileries in honor of the Dutch envoys and at which Louis was proclaimed King took place June 5, 1806.

3. Article 4 of the treaty of May 24, 1806, says: "In case of the heir to the throne being still in his minority the regency belongs legally to the Queen."

4. The Queen had added after "Monsieur de Flahaut" the following two words "almost disguised." She afterwards scratched them out.

5. Instead of "casting aside all prudence" the Queen had first written "had made him find this means of saying good-by to me."

6. Monsieur Frédéric Masson fixes the date of this departure as early in the morning of June 12. According to him the King and Queen spent the night of the 14th at Péronne, where they spent the following day leaving for Antwerp, Breda and The Hague on the 17th (*Napoléon et sa famille,* volume III, page 316). In his *Documents historiques,* vol. I, page 139, Louis, like the Queen, says they left Saint-Leu on the 15th.

7. Hortense again left The Hague on October 6, 1806, in a yacht and went to Mayence by way of Utrecht, Wesel and Cologne. She reached Mayence on the 12th and stayed at a hotel looking out on the harbor of Cassel. Josephine occupied the Teutonique Palace.

8. They wound the horn while they were still about two and a half miles away. This was the way we knew they were close at hand. (Note by Queen Hortense.)

9. Here the Queen is mistaken. She cannot be referring to the four regiments of the *garde d'honneur,* which were not formed till

after the senatus-consulte of April 3, 1813. The troops to which Hortense is referring were the four companies of *gendarmes d'ordonnance,* organized under the decree of October 1, 1806. They were intended to act as a body-guard for the Emperor, but this aroused so much jealousy in the Imperial Guard that the Emperor was obliged to dissolve it July 12, 1807.

10. On January 12, 1807, about half past four, a vessel loaded with 140 barrels containing 37,000 lbs. of powder had exploded on one of Leyden's principal canals, which is situated in one of the handsomest quarters of the city. The great majority of these houses were overthrown, and almost all the other buildings damaged.

11. The Dutch newspapers announced the sum given by the Queen as 10,000 florins.

CHAPTER VII

1. The Crown Prince died at midnight on the night of May 4-5, 1807, at the royal palace at The Hague after being ill for six days. Napoleon on June 4 opened a competition with a prize of 10,000 francs for the best remedy for croup. Eighty-three reports were presented to the jury at the Institut, but they were all second-rate.

2. Another passage later in the Queen's Memoirs allows the reader to identify this novel as *Corinne* by Madame de Staël, which had just appeared.

3. Hortense arrived at Cauterets June 18, 1807.

4. An allusion to the death of Madame de Broc, which took place at Aix in 1813, during an excursion with the Queen.

5. The body of the Crown Prince was placed in the chapel of Saint-Gerard at Notre Dame on July 8, 1807, while waiting for the reparations at the abbey of Saint Denis, burial place of the French kings and their families, to be completed.

6. The Queen means to refer to the *"Chambre d'Amour,"* situated on the coast between Biarritz and the beach of Anglet.

7. The bar of the Adour River.

8. This excursion took place July 25, 1807. The Queen was accompanied by the guides, Clement Lacrampe and Martin, to whom she afterwards presented a commemorative medal. In spite of what she says the Queen did not reach the Vignemale, that is to say the peak of Pique-Longue. Nevertheless, hers was the third party to cross the mountains at this point.

9. The inn at which she stopped has today become the Hôtel des Voyageurs, now (1927) managed by the great-grandson of the proprietor in 1807, Monsieur Vergez-Bellou.

10. This farm, still known as "the farm of Queen Hortense," is about an hour's walk away from Cauterets at an altitude of 1,215 meters, on the road that leads to the Riou Pass.

11. This statement of the Queen is particularly important since it puts an end to those disgusting stories regarding the birth of Napoleon III. The latter was born April 20, 1808, eight months and eight days after the reconciliation of August 12, but he was obviously born before he should have been (*avant terme*) according to the formal testimony of Baudelocque and Corvisart. It was necessary to give him baths of wine and wrap him in hot cotton wool.

12. The Emperor here refers to a light opera, now entirely forgotten but very popular during the whole of the Empire period, *Nina ou la Folle par amour.* The music was by Dalayrac, the words by Marsollier de Vivetières. The first performance had been given in Paris, May 15, 1786.

CHAPTER VIII

1. In the red manuscript the words "the injuries my long and frequent journeys" are replaced by "my accident."

2. This ball was given at the Palace of the Élysée, September 20, 1807. The civil marriage of Prince Jerome had taken place August 22, and the religious ceremony the following day in the Tuileries chapel. He married Princess Catherine of Würtemberg.

3. This refers to Prince Leopold Georges Christian Frederick of Saalfeld-Coburg, afterwards Leopold I of Belgium. Later the reader will see how grateful he showed himself for the Queen's welcome of him during his stay in Paris, and how generously he defended her cause in 1814. Speaking of the visit of Leopold to France, which the Queen here refers to, Napoleon at Saint Helena said: "Prince Leopold was one of the handsomest men in Paris at the time. During a ball given by the Queen of Naples Leopold acted a masked brilliant part with great elegance." See Barry E. O'Meara, *Napoléon en exil ou l'Echo de Sainte-Hélène,* Brussels, Arnold Lacrosse, 1823, 2 vols. in octavo, vol. II, page 31.

4. Ferdinand John Joseph, brother of Francis II of Austria, was born in Florence, May 6, 1769. He became Grand Duke of Tuscany (Ferdinand III) in 1790, Grand Duke of Würtemburg in 1805. He recovered Tuscany in 1814, and died at Florence, June 18, 1824.

5. The Emperor returned to Paris January 1, 1808, at 9 P.M.

6. The Emperor left April 2, 1808.

7. At 1 A.M. at the rue Cerutti. This child (Charles Louis Napoleon) was the future Napoleon III.

8. The Queen's doctor was Baudelocque, as on the previous occasions. At the birth of each child, Baudelocque received 10,000 francs in bank-notes enclosed in a gold box adorned with diamonds and worth another 10,000 francs.

9. In her novel *Eugène de Rothelin,* which appeared in 1808, Madame de Souza, Monsieur de Flahaut's mother, who had remarried, makes her heroine Athénais utter a similar confession to the hero, Eugène. Her son wrote her that he recognized himself in the character of Eugène and that Athénais was the Queen. He, however, pointed out that in the novel, Eugène asks Athénais to tell him her troubles, whereas Hortense had come to him without being asked to relate the story of her life. See Earl of Kerry, *The First Napoleon, loc. cit.,* page 236.

10. Since the month of November, 1806, Monsieur de Flahaut had also been in love with the Countess Potocka.

11. Napoleon was also at that time annoyed with his brother for having refused the Spanish throne, which had been offered him in a letter of March 27, 1808.

12. The Queen received 480,000 francs a year for herself and her son plus 120,000 francs for her private expenses.

13. In spite of the Queen's refusal, Decazes remained in Paris and sent secret reports to Louis. He had the imprudence to send these reports through the mails; Napoleon was informed of them, and on October 15, 1809, sent him word to leave Paris within twenty-four hours.

14. Queen Hortense is constantly trying to defend her mother against the charge of extravagance.

15. The Emperor left Saint Cloud September 22, 1808.

16. Voltaire, *Œdipe,* Act. 1, Scene 1, rôle of Philoctète. This performance took place October 4, 1808.

17. This undoubtedly refers to Alexander's passion for Marie Antovna Narychkine, born Princess Tchetwertinski, which lasted till 1818. But the statement that it had already lasted fifteen years in 1809 is slightly exaggerated. According to his Imperial Highness, Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailowitch (*L'Empereur Alexandre Ier,* Saint Petersburg, Manufacture des Papiers de l'État,, 1912, quarto, Vol. I, pages 48 and 56), the beginning of this liaison dated only from 1804.

18. Prince Napoleon Louis was made Grand-Duc de Berg and de Clèves by the decree of March 3, 1809. Murat had given up this grand duchy by the treaty of July 15, 1808, by which he became King of Naples.

19. The Emperor arrived in Paris January 23, 1809.

20. Talleyrand, who had been appointed *vice-grand électeur,* August

10, 1807, had been replaced as Minister of Foreign Affairs, the day before by Champagny, who was later Duc de Cadore. On January 28, 1809, Napoleon, in the course of a violent scene with Talleyrand, called him a coward, a thief and disloyal man. On the 30th, Talleyrand was removed from his position as Grand Chamberlain.

21. The first edition of *Delphine* appeared in December, 1802. Delphine was a portrait of the author, Madame de Staël. "Madame de Vernon, a hard, cold woman, who did not believe in anything, who was unscrupulous, and only admired success, but on the other hand possessed an irresistible charm, was the former friend of Madame de Staël, who had since deserted her" (Monsieur de Talleyrand). The latter revenged himself by the following epigram: "People say Madame de Staël has put us both into her novel. She has, however, disguised both of us, for, in the book, we are both women." Paul Gautier: *Madame de Staël et Napoléon,* page 103.

22. April 13, 1809, at 4:30 A. M.

23. Refers to the battle of Sacile (April 16, 1809). Eugène, who had been obliged to retire from the Isonzo towards Sacile, was defeated by Archduke John of Austria, near this city, and forced again to retreat.

24. The Viceroy's army joined that commanded by the Emperor, at Ebersdorf, May 29, 1809.

CHAPTER IX

1. June 14 and July 6, 1809.

2. Attempt made by Friedrich Staabs at Schoenbrunn, October 12, 1809.

3. Marie Lontchinska, Comtess Walewska. While the Emperor was staying in Vienna, she lived in a house which had been arranged for her near the park of Schoenbrunn.

4. Early in October, 1809.

5. Josephine did not arrive at Fontainebleau till 6 P.M., nine hours after the Emperor, who rebuked her for the delay.

6. This may refer to Madame de Barral. Her husband was chamberlain to the King of Westphalia, and she was twenty-eight years of age in 1809. She died in 1851.

7. The Emperor and Empress left Fontainebleau November 14, and returned to the Tuileries.

8. The rest of the account of this incident and the following one allow us to place them as having occurred on November 30, 1809. We know that, on that date, Josephine fainted while she was alone

with the Emperor in their drawing-room after dinner. The Emperor, aided by Bausset, was obliged to carry her to her room, which was on the ground floor of the Palace, and he sent for Dr. Corvisart and Hortense to come to the Tuileries.

9. The dispatch left Paris November 26. Eugène received it at Milan December 1, and left for Paris the same day.

10. According to the Queen's account, this lunch took place November 30, but she may have been mistaken by two or three days.

11. Madame Mère lived at the Hôtel de Brienne, now Hôtel du Ministre de la Guerre, 14, rue Saint-Dominique.

12. Grand reception at Malmaison, December 1; the Te Deum at Notre Dame, December 3; review of the troops at the Tuileries and reception at the Hôtel de Ville, December 4; reception at Grosbois, December 11; formal reception at court, December 14, 1809.

13. The family assembly during which Napoleon and Josephine signified their mutual acceptance of a divorce took place at 9 A.M. The Privy-Council met at 10 to draw up the text of the *senatus-consulte.*

14. The exact phrase is: "She adorned fifteen years of my life; the memory of that will always remain inscribed in my heart."

15. Hortense's memory is here at fault. It was December 16, the day after the scene she has just described, that Eugène went at 11 A.M. to the Senate, where he presided at the sitting and read the speech which Maret had given him already written out in full. He, however, modified it considerably. The *senatus-consulte* was adopted by 76 votes to 7 and 4 white slips out of 87 members present.

16. Josephine left the Tuileries on December 16, at 2 P.M. in the pouring rain. She drove away in the court carriage *l'Opale,* now preserved at the museum of Malmaison.

17. The Emperor left the Tuileries, December 16, at 4 P.M.

18. The Palace of the Elysée had been given her as residence in Paris by the decree of December 16, 1809.

19. January 28, 1810.

20. March 11, 1810.

21. The Emperor arrived at Compiègne, March 20, 1810.

22. Francis I, who was three times left a widower, remarried three times.

23. Three tents had been erected about seven miles from Soissons, where the first meeting of Napoleon and Marie Louise was to take place in accordance with the ceremony used at the time of the arrival of Marie Antoinette. The Emperor and Empress were to meet on March 28, but the day before, Napoleon left Compiègne at noon, met Marie Louise in front of the church at Courcelles, and brought her back directly to Compiègne, omitting Soissons entirely. They

arrived at the palace at 9:30 P.M. The Queen of Naples had gone to meet the new Empress at Braunau.

24. The Emperor and Empress left Compiègne March 30 at noon and arrived at Saint Cloud at 5:15 P.M.

25. The wedding party left Saint Cloud April 2 for Paris, where the religious ceremony was celebrated by Cardinal Fesch on the same day.

26. The first stone of the Arc de Triomphe was laid August 15, 1806, before the final plans for the structure had been decided upon. In 1810 only seven courses (of masonry) were above the level of the ground. On these a model of the complete edifice in cloth and framework was erected.

27. One should not be surprised to have the Queen say "would have later produced." In 1815 work on the Arc de Triomphe was stopped, and Louis XVIII even considered having what had already been built destroyed. Work was not resumed till 1823. Consequently when the Queen wrote the above, in 1820, it seemed possible that the edifice would never be completed.

28. The altar was erected in the *Salon carré* of the Louvre.

29. Monsieur de Flahaut, who had been wounded in the combat at Ens, was at that time in Paris, staying with his mother, Madame de Souza.

30. April 9, 1810. After the marriage and a short stay at Saint Cloud, Napoleon and Marie Louise returned to Compiègne, where they arrived April 5.

31. April 11, 1810.

32. April 14, 1810.

33. Royal palace built by William III and situated 29 kilometers to the northeast of Amsterdam.

34. We have been unable to find the text of this letter from the King, but the Queen's reference to it puts an end to the story that she had left Loo secretly, and without her husband's knowledge.

35. This departure took place June 1, 1810.

36. This reception took place July 1, 1810, at the Italian Embassy, then located in the rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. Prince Eugène's wife, who was *enceinte* at the time, had remained in the room where the fire broke out, and was only saved by her husband's presence of mind, which enabled him to discover a secret door.

37. On hearing of the Emperor's order (June 24, 1810) that the French troops were to occupy Amsterdam, Louis drew up his act of abdication, a message to the *Corps Législatif,* and a proclamation to his subjects. At the same time, he wrote his brother. The Queen first heard of this by a letter from Madame de Boubers, then by a letter

from the King, in which he said: "The Regency belongs to Your Majesty by right."

38. Louis signed his abdication at Haarlem. During the night of July 2-3, a little after midnight, he had left for an unknown destination.

39. Contrary to the impression given by what the Queen wrote, the *Conseil de Régence* had not proclaimed the new king. At the same time, the decree dated Amsterdam, July 3, by which the *Conseil* was formed, was issued in the name of Napoleon Louis. Holland was annexed to the Empire by the decree dated from the palace of Rambouillet July 9, 1810.

40. On leaving Haarlem, Louis avoided Amsterdam, and traveled, by way of Naarden and Osnabruck to Dresden, where he arrived July 9.

41. By a *senatus-consulte* dated December 13, which appeared in the *Moniteur* of the 15th, Napoleon allowed Louis to keep the title of king, and bestowed an allowance on him which Hortense's husband refused, turning over all his estates to the Queen by a deed signed December 30, 1810.

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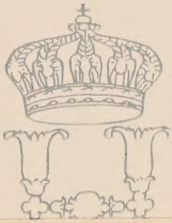

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Hortense, 1783-1887

The memoirs of Queen Hortense

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